

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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

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HUNTINGTON

## Open House showcases school & community partners

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

The parking lot in front of Gateway Regional Middle and High Schools was filled nearly to capacity on Thursday, March 7 as the schools held their annual Open House.

Families were able to visit classrooms, see school initiatives in action, support class fundraisers and visit with numerous community organizations. From robotics demonstrations on the first floor, to a scavenger hunt for middle school students and their families, the evening was rife with energy and engagement.

"I thought it went really well," said new Principal Dr. William Sullivan. "It was great to see so many students and families here, as well as so many community partners. I am hoping we can expand to even more next year."

Among the community groups attending to speak with students and families were the Gateway Youth Athletic Association, Hilltown Market, Huntington Fire Department, Child Advocacy Center, Huntington Lion's Club, North Hall Association, Westfield Bank, Western Mass Hilltown Hikers, Appalachian Mountain Club, the Southern Hilltowns Domestic Violence



Gateway Connection, from left Gateway librarian Bill Brown welcomed community librarians Nicole Daviau (Porter Memorial Library Director in Blandford, Gateway parent, former Gateway Assistant Librarian; Russell Public Library Director Dawne Piers-Gamble and former Gateway teacher, alum, and parent of two alums; Huntington Public Library Director Amanda Loiselle and library staff member, Michael Paul Loiselle, both Gateway alums.

Task Force and It Takes a Village.

Gateway Librarian Bill Brown welcomed the librarians from the towns of Huntington, Blandford and Russel, all of whom had a prior connection to Gateway,

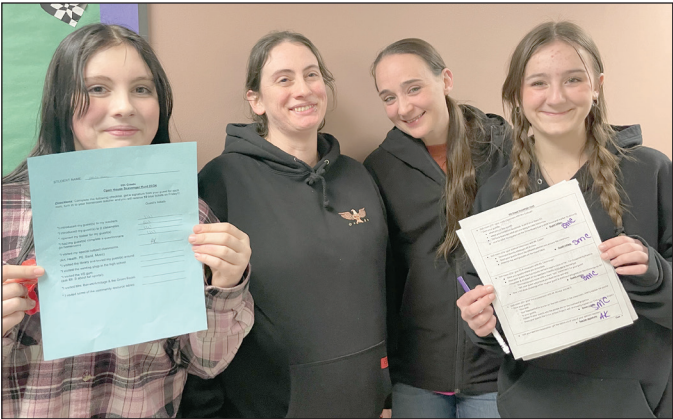
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Technology Director Christopher Parker demonstrated the many skills of Loona the robot, who will sing a song upon request, answer questions, fist bump and will even help Parker conduct safety trainings for students.

Turley photos by Wendy Long



Sixth grader Trinity Norris demonstrates new flute playing skills for her mother, as Instrumental Music Director Beth Guertin looks on.



Sixth grader Noralee Shirley, Lana Whitney, Shayna Collins and eighth grader Mady Smith, taking part in the Middle School Scavenger Hunt, where students had to bring their family members to points of interest throughout the school to collect staff signatures.

BLANDFORD

## Resident discusses condemned house

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Hayden Road resident Kevin Green told Select Board Monday night that there were three youngsters in the Hayden Road York home over the weekend apparently testing a haunted house rumor.

Shelia Green was driving by the house on Saturday when a dog ran out of the house followed by a very young boy. She had a conversation with him and learned he was visiting on Birch Hill Road from Westfield. He had a handful of books of matches. Two other youngsters came out of the house and Green said she thought they were ten or 12, also with hands full of matches. according to Green, "in case they got scared...they could light the matches and it wouldn't be dark."

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HUNTINGTON

## GEF to host Trivia Night fundraiser

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

The Gateway Education Foundation excitedly prepares for its Third Annual Trivia Night.

This year's event will be held on Saturday, March 23 at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road and doors will open at 6 p.m. with trivia running from 7-9 p.m. Returning as emcee will be special guest Steve Nagle, known from the Rock 102 Bax & O'Brien Show.

Trivia Night is the annual FUNdraiser that supports the Foundation's Funds for Learning Grant Program, which pays for "out-of-the-box" learning opportunities across Gateway schools and classrooms. Tickets are on sale now and are \$25 per person or people may register a table of eight for \$175.

Tickets will also be sold at the

TRIVIA NIGHT, page 3





# HILLTOWNS

## Habitat for Humanity accepts applications through April 3

HUNTINGTON – The Village Closet donation center is becoming well-known around the region as the go-to place for free second-hand baby and children’s clothing, toys and the vast quantity of supplies that families need when a new baby is born.

Families have also come to rely on the Village Closet during times of crisis. Pandemic-related inflation, product recalls and systemic barriers create situations where families struggle to provide basic necessities for their babies, including diapers, infant formula and car seats. These items are not discretionary or luxury items, but required health and safety needs. When they are not available, babies and children are at risk for illness, injury, and death.

To help families provide these basic needs, the Village Closet and its managing organization It Takes a Village have teamed up with several businesses and organizations across the region. For several years, Baystate Health has been supporting the Village Closet with funding through their Community Benefits Program and over 7,500 diapers and 240 packages of wipes each year.

In their 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, every Baystate hospital listed “Lack of resources to meet

basic needs” as an important determinant of health. Nearly half of all families in the United States cannot afford enough diapers for their children and currently they cannot use their SNAP (food stamps) or WIC benefits to purchase diapers. Additionally, if families do not have enough diapers to send to daycare or preschool, the parent cannot go to work or school, exacerbating the financial instability that caused a diaper shortage in the first place.

The Village Closet is part of the National Diaper Bank Network and is the only registered diaper bank in the Hilltowns. The Village Closet also partners with the United Way of Franklin and Hampshire Counties and their regional diaper bank, which serves 14 local partner agencies (including pantries, family programs, and health centers) with more than 10,000 diapers, pull-ups and wipes each month. The UWFH Diaper Bank also supports its partners and local families by participating in the federal Diaper Distribution Demonstration and Research Pilot, running through April 2025.

The Village Closet received a grant this year from Buckle Up for Life, the national car seat safety program from Toyota and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, which provided 50 brand-new

convertible car seats to be distributed to local families. Motor vehicle traffic crashes are a leading cause of death for children in the United States, and children are more likely to be injured, suffer more severe injuries or die in motor vehicle crashes when they are not properly restrained.

A 2017 study estimated that 59% of car seats and booster seats are used incorrectly, often because the child is in the wrong seat for their age and weight. Financial donations also allowed the Village Closet to hire a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician to counsel the families on which car seat they needed and to install it for them. There will be one more car seat distribution event this spring, and families can reach out to It Takes a Village for information.

Finally, as winters in New England aren’t getting any less snowy, making sure children stay warm is a priority. Steve Lewis Subaru and Operation Warm, through their program Subarau Loves to Care, donated 130 coats to Village Closet families in February. “The best part of my job is giving back to our local communities and spreading the word to our customers on how they can help,” said Joe Clark, General Manager of Steve Lewis Subaru. “It’s organizations like It Takes a Village that truly inspire myself and my

staff to ask, ‘what can we do to help?’”

Several local businesses and groups also donated coats and winter gear as part of the Village Closet’s holiday toy drives, including Done Right Chimney in Williamsburg, the New Hingham PTO, Bob “the Bike Man” Charland of Pedal Thru Youth, the Huntington Police Department and Chief Robert Garriepy, Hilltown Community Coat Drive and the Westhampton Women’s Fellowship.

Unlike most thrift stores, all items at the Village Closet are 100% free to everyone, and unlike many other charitable donation centers, there are no income or residency requirements to visit and shop. The Village Closet strives to be a safe and welcoming place for families regardless of their situation, and works diligently to reduce the stigma that families face when they ask for help. It can often be difficult for families to find that “Village” that we hear so much about, the one that it apparently takes to raise a child. However, when agencies, businesses, and community members come together to protect our most vulnerable neighbors, we all become part of that Village.

For more information about the Village Closet and other It Takes a Village programs, people may visit [www.hilltown-village.org](http://www.hilltown-village.org).

## Hampshire Regional High presents ‘Mary Poppins’

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional High School presents the high-flying musical production, Mary Poppins, March 22-24 in the school’s auditorium.

Disney and Cameron Mackintosh’s Mary Poppins is a musical based on the stories of P.L. Travers and the Walt Disney Film. Prepare to be swept away by breathtaking music, dancing, scenery, costumes, and bits of magic. Performances are Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 24 at 2 p.m.

Myka Plunkett returns to direct her eighth production at Hampshire Regional High School with Co-Director, Nicole Tripp. They are joined by

Music Director, Graham Christian and Choreographer, Loryn Engelbrecht. The talented cast and crew of over 55 HRHS and local elementary school students will be accompanied by a pit band of local musicians.

Ticket prices are \$15 for adults/general admission, \$10 for seniors and children under 18 and \$5 for HRHS students and staff. Tickets are available by calling 413-437-5587, emailing [hrhstickets@gmail.com](mailto:hrhstickets@gmail.com), at the door or visiting GoFan link: <https://gofan.co/app/school/MA23946>. HRHS students and staff can get \$5 tickets through the code available at HRHS or by visiting the main office. There is a service fee for all tickets purchased online.

## Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity accepting applications

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity announces applications are available for two new projects: A one-bedroom adaptable home in Greenfield and a three-bedroom two-story home in Northampton.

The application deadline is Wednesday, April 3. Eligible applicants will have incomes up to 60% of area median income (adjusted for family size).

People interested in submitting an application are invited to attend an information session to learn more. An online information session will take place on Wednesday, March 27 at 6:30 p.m. People may visit <https://forms.gle/Xe5YT2C4b1vwXWj7> to register for the sessions. An in person information session will be held on Saturday, March 23 at 10 a.m. at the Greenfield Public Library.

During the information session, potential applicants will learn about Habitat’s selection criteria and how to prepare a complete application. The selection criteria include housing need, ability to make mortgage payments and willingness to partner with Habitat, such as participating in the construction of the home and other Habitat projects. Applications and more information can be found by visiting <https://www.pvhabitat.org/apply/>.

All homes will be all-electric and built to Energy Star standards and are designed to be visitable by someone in a wheelchair. The home in Northampton will be two-story and the one in Greenfield will be one-story; the one-story home will be adaptable for someone with mobility impairments. All Habitat built homes are restricted to income eligible buyers in perpetuity.

Since 1989, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity has built decent, affordable homes with over 50 families with low incomes in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. They build the homes with volunteer labor and donations of material, supplies, land and services. At the onset of homebuilding, a family is selected and enters into a long term partnership with Pioneer Valley Habitat.

Future homeowners contribute 250 hours of labor during the construction of their home alongside volunteers from the community. Upon completion, the home is sold to the family with an affordable mortgage. Habitat is a hand-up, not a hand-out: the organization has a perpetual legacy in that all mortgage funds received are reinvested to build more homes. They are a housing organization helping to bring stability to families, bringing more stability into the neighborhoods and communities.

## Unofficial primary results

Town Clerks released the unofficial primary election results held Tuesday, March 5.

Blandford voters cast 92 Democrat, five Libertarian and 186 Republican ballots. On the Democrat side 79 voted for Joseph R. Biden for the Democratic Presidential candidate with seven having no preference, three for Marianne Williamson and two for Dean Phillips.

On the Libertarian ballot, voters cast three no preference ballots and one each for Michael D. Rectrenwald and Lars Damian Mapsted. On the Republican side 137 cast ballots for Donald J. Trump, 46 for Nikki Haley and one for Ron DeSantis.

Goshen voters cast 136 ballots for Biden, six no preference, two for Phillips and one for Williamson on the Democratic ballot. One ballot was cast for Rectrenwald on the Libertarian ballot. On the Republican ballot, Trump received 67 votes and Haley 51.

Huntington voters on the Democrat side cast 135 ballots for Biden, 16 no preference, nine for Williamson and two for Phillips. On the Republican said Trump received 167 votes, 59 Haley, one no preference, one for Chris

Christie and one for Vivek Ramaswamy.

Middlefield voters on the Democrat side cast 55 ballots for Biden, seven no preference and two for Williamson. On the Libertarian ballot two cast votes for Chase Russell Oliver. On the Republican ballot Trump received 38 ballots and Nikki Haley 37.

In Otis, 162 cast Democrat ballots and 163 Republican and four Libertarian ballots. Otis voted 137 for Biden, 12 no preference, six or Williamson and 5 for Phillips. On the Libertarian side one voted for Mapsted and two had no preference. On the Republican side 86 voted for Trump, 72 for Haley, three no preference and one Ramaswamy.

In Worthington,, 341 of the 993 registered voters cast ballots. On the Democrat side, 171 voted for Biden, 19 had no preference, six for Phillips and four for Williamson. On the Libertarian ballot, there was one vote for Jacob George Hornberger. On the Republican side, 71 voted for Trump, 58 for Haley, three for Christie and two no preference.

Voters also elected State Committee Man and Woman on three primary ballots.

## Tri-Town Health Department offers household hazardous waste collection

LEE – Household hazardous waste collection for residents of Alford, Becket, Egremont, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Richmond, Sandisfield, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington and West Stockbridge will be held on Saturday, May 11 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Lee Wastewater Treatment Plant, 379 Pleasant St. Pre-registration is required. Residents of the above listed towns may visit [www.tritownhealth.org](http://www.tritownhealth.org) to register. For more information, residents my call Tr-Town Health Department at 413-243-5540.

They may bring from the yard/garden: pesticides, fungicides herbicides, insect sprays, killers, muriatic acid, flea powder, no-pest strips, chemical fertilizers, lighter fluid and moth balls.

From the workbench items include: rust proofers, wood preservatives, wood strippers and stains, paint thinners, lead

and oil based pain, varnish, full aerosol cans, sealants, adhesives and solvents.

From the house, items include drain cleaners, oven cleaners, floor cleaners, metal polish, arts and crafts supplies, photo chemicals, chemistry kits and rechargeable batteries.

From the garage items include fuels/gasoline/kerosene, brake and transmission fluids, car wax, polish, engine degreaser/motor oil, swimming pool chemicals, driveway sealer, antifreeze and car-lead acid batteries. Mercury products accepted include thermometers, thermostats and other mercury rodent button batteries.

People should not bring latex paint, standard batteries, asbestos, fireworks and explosives, ammunition, construction debris, propane/gas cylinders, smoke detectors, radioactive material, ire extinguishers, fluorescent lamps, electronics, PCBs, medications, medical wastes and medical sharps.



HUNTINGTON

Assembly of God Church to hold spaghetti dinner

HUNTINGTON – The Pioneer Valley Assembly of God Church, 63 Old Chester Road, on Saturday, March 16 at 5:30 p.m. will hold a free spaghetti dinner.

In support of its youth program, PVAG is hosting a free spaghetti supper with donations optional, but much appreciated. Along with the dinner, there will be an auction of fabulous and fancy desserts to benefit PVAG’s youth program. People may call the church office at 413-667-3196 to sign up for the spaghetti dinner.

Children get ‘eggcited’ for March 23 Easter egg hunt

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Recreation Committee announces an Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, March 23 at 11 a.m. at Pettis Field.

Organizer Vicki Mayhew reports that about 800 plastic eggs, filled with toys and candy, will be hidden. Children will be divided into three different age groups and there will be one lucky winner in each grouping. Winners will be determined by finding an egg for their group that tells them they won a prize, which is their own fully stocked Easter basket.

Mayhew said that they typically have around 45 children, giving each child about 1 in 15 odds of winning. There is limited parking at Pettis Field with additional slots at the Huntington Public Library, which will host a program afterwards at noon. “Imagine That” will be offered by Davis Bates and will include music and stories that celebrate literacy and inspire creativity.

Bates’ website reports that Pete Seeger called him, “thoughtful, creative, human and a fantastic storyteller.” A Parents Choice Magazine Gold Award was given to Bates for his recording “Family Stories.” He has performed throughout the northeast for 38 years and supports participants in telling stories from their own family and cultural traditions. All ages are welcome. Children should bring a basket to collect their eggs.

Town seeks residents for OSRP work group

HUNTINGTON – The Town of Huntington was recently awarded a grant to work with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to update the town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The town is looking for five to seven residents to be part of a work group that will meet six times between now and November. The 2002 OSRP can be viewed by visiting <https://www.huntingtonma.us/media/3901>. People should email [admin@huntingtonma.us](mailto:admin@huntingtonma.us) if interested in being part of the work group by Monday, March 25. The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2 at 10 a.m.

TRIVIA NIGHT

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door. People who do not have a team will be included at a table. There is a limit of 120 people at this event, so be sure to purchase tickets early. Tickets are available online by visiting [gatewayeducationfoundation.org](http://gatewayeducationfoundation.org).

“The first, second and third place winning teams will receive a one of a kind trophy designed and 3D printed by Gateway Technology Director Chris Parker,” said GEF Board President and Gateway art and special education teacher Avery Wing, who added, “And bragging rights.”

There will also be a 50/50 raffle priced at \$5 per ticket. In addition, participants can purchase a sheet of tickets and enter raffles for numerous items at the end of the evening, which include artists donations from the Gray Catbird Gift Shop & Pottery Studio, Crystals from Junebug Rocks, a photo shoot with Sarah Foley, wine, coffee

and golf gift baskets and gift certificates from Moltenbreys Market, Main Street Styles, Amazon, Dick’s Sporting Goods and Starbucks.

This is a Bring Your Own Bottle event and participants are also invited to bring food or order in from nearby Comfort Kitchen.

The Gateway Education Foundation formed in 2012 to educate, elevate and inspire the students and classrooms of the Gateway Regional School District in Huntington. This private, non-profit organization raises funds and disburses them through a small grants program. Examples of funded projects include Model United Nations, robotics, author talks, summer reading programs, Girls State, Braille library materials for visually impaired students and much more. Since its inception, GEF has funded over 30 projects totaling over \$115,000.

OPEN HOUSE

from page 1

to showcase their programs to families visiting the school library. Present were his former Library Assistant Nicole Daviau and a Gateway parent, who is now the Library Director at Porter Memorial Library in Blandford; retired middle school teacher Dawne Piers Gamble, also a Gateway alum and parent of two Gateway alums, who is now the Director of the Russell Public Library and Huntington Public Library Director and Gateway alum, Amanda Loiselle was joined by her brother, also on the staff of the library and also a Gateway alum, Michael Paul Loiselle.

Several student organizations held fundraisers, including a calendar raffle for the senior class, bake sale by the sophomores and juniors and a craft fair by the freshman class. Curriculum Director Deanna LeBlanc held a robotics demonstration with the robots used by the middle school after school program, as well as the robots used by the high school robotics team.

Nearby, Technology Director Christopher Parker put a pet robot named Loona through her paces, where she answered questions, sang a song upon request, came when she was called, wagged her ears as people talked to her and even slowly closed her “eyes” when Parker picked her up and rocked her. According to Parker, Loona is still in the experimental phase for Gateway.

“Currently, we have found that the best interactions are in elementary school, or with students who have disabilities. For example, our Life Skills class seems to really enjoy the interaction.” Parker explained that Loona interacts mostly between sight and sound, although she also has some touch sensors on her head. “Loona does understand some sign language as well,” Parker said, adding that she is likely to end up working primarily with students, who need help with social emotional learning.

School groups represented included the Gateway Education Foundation, Middle School PTO, the Gateway School Based Health Center, the Junior Explorers and Explorers Summer Camps, Gateway athletics, and special education department.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

Will my benefit increase if I work while collecting disability?

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor



**Dear Rusty**

I will be 64 in March and currently receive Social Security Disability Insurance payments. My full retirement age is 67, but I'm thinking about trying to return to work.

If I work and my earnings exceed the monthly disability payment limits, but do not exceed the annual limit, how will my disability payments be affected? Will working while receiving Social Security disability payments change my Social Security benefit amount when I reach my full retirement age of 67?

**Signed Mending**

**Dear Mending**

Social Security doesn't go by annual earnings when it comes to disability; they go by monthly earnings. If your work earnings in any one month of 2024 exceed \$1,550, that will be a flag to SS that you are no longer disabled (\$2,590 per month if you're blind). If that happens for a few months in a row, they will most likely stop your SSDI payments.

Often, this happens retroactively, they won't find out until sometime later that you repeatedly exceeded the monthly limit, but they will likely cancel your SSDI benefits and require you to repay any benefits you received in months you exceeded the monthly SSDI earnings limit or months they deem you were capable of working without restriction.

I suggest you consider enrolling in Social

Security's "Ticket to Work" program. While enrolled, you can work and will have a rolling nine month "Trial Work Period" over five years, during which you can earn more than \$1,110/month in 2024 without jeopardizing your SSDI benefits.

If, after completing your nine month trial work period, you are taken off of SSDI (because you're no longer considered disabled), and you again become disabled and unable to work, your SSDI benefits can resume without requiring you to go through the entire application process again. You can test your ability to work, will be able to work some and can earn more than the limit in some months, which makes the Ticket to Work program your best option. Read more about it here by visiting <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>.

As for whether working while on SSDI will improve your benefit at your Full Retirement Age, that depends. Your current SSDI benefit is equal to your FRA entitlement from your earnings record at your disability onset date, but paid to you prior to your FRA. The method for determining your benefit under SSDI is complex and depends on the age at which you became unable to work and the number of Social Security credits you had accumulated at that time. Although SS retirement benefits normally require you earn at least 40 SS quarter credits and are based on your highest earning 35 years, those approved for SSDI can get benefits with fewer than 40 credits and less than 35 years of lifetime earnings. Since each case is unique, I cannot say whether your earnings while on SSDI will improve your FRA amount, but

Social Security will monitor your earnings and increase your benefit if appropriate.

FYI, your SSDI benefit would normally automatically convert to become your regular SS retirement benefit at your FRA at the same amount you were receiving while on SSDI. It's possible that the limited earnings you may have from working while on SSDI may increase your benefit, but that's impossible for me to predict. Your benefit is based on your lifetime earnings history (adjusted for inflation), not on your contributions to Social Security while working.

So, if you are on SSDI and wish to try returning to work, and you think your monthly earnings will occasionally exceed the SSDI limit, I suggest you contact Social Security (1-800-772-1213 or your local office to explore enrolling in the Ticket to Work program. That would be your best option to avoid jeopardizing your SSDI benefits, and your benefit amount will be automatically adjusted by Social Security if appropriate.

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

News from my garden to yours

in the

Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



I received a text from a friend earlier today asking what is covering my strawberry plants. I answered her with one word: water.

Yes indeed, a good portion of my garden is drowning at the moment, as are various parts of my yard. We have had too much rain in too short of a period and the ground is still frozen partway down.

It's happened before and will likely happen again, but every time it does, I wonder how these areas could possibly rebound and look good come spring. Usually, they do and with little help from me.

The water recedes and spring comes.

Keep in mind that the soil, be it in your garden or yard, will lose some of its fertility because of leaching, and it will be compacted from such excessive rainfall. Give your plants a side dressing of compost this spring; it will be sure to help restore fertility and improve

the condition of the soil in general.

According to a soil test, my garden was notoriously low in nitrogen, so I incorporated blood meal into the soil at planting time with another dose a few weeks later. It didn't occur to me at the time, but flooding a couple of times early in the year could be the culprit of the low nitrogen reading.

Soil that is heavy with water literally pushes out the space that was meant for oxygen and becomes compacted. Without oxygen, plants' vascular systems won't function properly.

As I said before, a few days in the off season likely won't hurt much, but if this were to happen during the growing season, your plants may look wilted even though they are sitting in water.

Root rot, perhaps, or simply that the roots are unable to absorb the water around them.

Lawns should be aerated to remedy this problem, and garden soil should be loosened – once it's dry of course – to get some air into the soil. This can be done numerous ways, by use of various hand tools.

Although scratching around with a three tine cultivator will likely bring some weed seeds to the surface, it is one of my favorite things to do in the garden. I find it a great stress-buster, too.

Do remember to try not to walk on sat-

urated soil or it will compound the problem. Even in the spring when you are working in your garden, place a board under your feet to distribute your weight evenly and prevent more compaction.

Have you noticed that your houseplants have begun to put on an abundance of new growth? Mine sure have! Support this with a dose of half strength liquid fertilizer.

I need to take cuttings of fuchsia and geranium plants that I overwintered. It will sure be great to make cemetery logs with our own geraniums this year.

I will simply cut a terminal (meaning top) stem about 4-5 inches long just after a node (that's where the leaved join the stem). I'll carefully take off all but the top two or three leaves and insert the leafless section into a small pot (say around 2-3 inches in diameter) of good quality moist potting soil.

The two or three leaves you left will be above the soil line. If you have rooting hormone on hand, you can dip the stem into that first, but you don't have to; plants in active growth usually root fine even without it.

I will place my cuttings in indirect light and mist with a spray bottle a couple of times a day to keep them from wilting before they root. Check in about a month, and if you are lucky, roots will have formed.

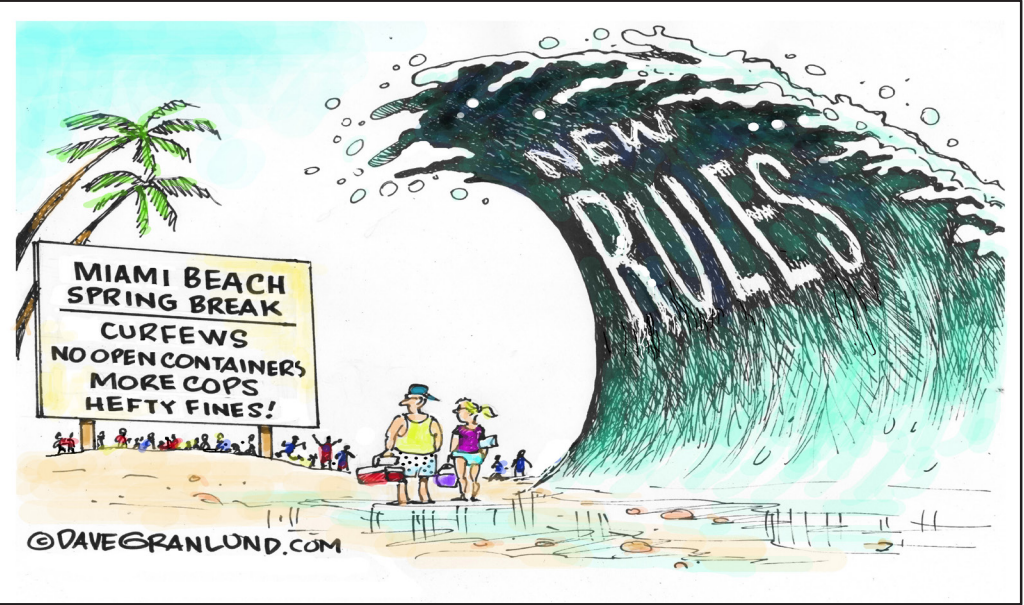
Depending on the size pot you used, and the size of the roots, it may be a good time to put the plants into a bigger pot and place them in a sunnier window until it's safe to plant them outside.

My daffodil plants are starting to pop up here and there in the yard. I had a little bit of balanced organic granular fertilizer left from last year, so I sprinkled it around the clusters.

Now and once the flowers have gone by are the two best times to fertilize narcissus. I am so excited to enjoy the varied colors and scents from this huge Genus of plants.

To me, they are the epitome of a true spring flower. Soon enough, soon enough!

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*



EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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



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OPINION

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Local angels came to the aid of accident victim

I want to shine praise on a group of locals.

The other day, I came upon a car accident while walking; as I got closer, a man was on the phone and a single car accident had occurred. The good Samaritan had stopped to check and already called 911. The woman trapped in the car was bloody and we checked and consoled her and waited with her on the phone with her daughter for only a couple of minutes before the State Police arrived, followed shortly by the Hilltown Community Ambulance.

During this time another good Samaritan stopped and offered a pack of tissues. The police and emergency medical people were calm, concerned and professional as the woman was carefully extracted, kindly assessed and packed

into the ambulance for transport to a local hospital.

We're all in this together and sometimes that is clearly seen; these people that day are treasures. I'm so proud of the professional, caring behavior of our local Knights and Healers and I so love where I live.

**Jeff Penn**  
*Huntington*

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Maple syrup how sweet it is

By Deborah Daniels  
*Correspondent*

Considering a maple syrup pancake breakfast?

Please do because you get a lot more bang from your maple sugar buck than you do with honey. Maple syrup has fewer calories than honey and it is rich in minerals and vitamins such as zinc, potassium and vitamin B6 and Niacin to name a few. It has antioxidants as well, which help rid our bodies of free radicals, which accelerate aging.

How do we get maple syrup? From maple trees, mainly sugar maple trees and red maple trees ,but black and silver maple trees are also used. The trees are tapped when they reach 10-12 inches in diameter.

That equals a 40 year old tree that can be tapped for as long as 100 years providing it remains healthy. Forty gallons of sap yield 1 gallon of syrup or 10 gallons of sap will yield 1 quart of maple syrup for those of us mathematically challenged trying to imagine 40 gallons. A really good run of tree sap can reach 4-5 gallons of sap per tap. How's that for a crop with little maintenance except that from Mother Nature?

How the devil do you get syrup from sap? You boil off the water. Sap contains 98% water and 2% sugar. But first you have to harvest the sap, which means collecting the buckets of sap. More and more today, this is done with blue plastic tubing that is hooked up to the spile, or tap spout, which is drilled into the tree, draining the sap into a

bucket or huge collection chamber.

Blue tubing is used because it screens the sunlight which can degrade the sap. It also allows you to see the flow of sap. Pray the bears don't figure out what is running in them because we don't need bears getting drunk on sap. Animals have been known to chew holes in the tubing searching for food. Sap water will darken as it sits waiting to be boiled.

Next the sap is filtered and then boiled in an evaporator, removing water leaving syrup with a 66-67% sugar content. The syrup is then filtered and niter suspension of minerals or any sugar sand is removed. Reverse osmosis must be mentioned because this is how much of the water is removed from the sap before it is boiled. Sap is forced under high pressure through a semi-permeable membrane through which only the water can pass and be removed, leaving sap that requires much less time to boil.

Then you may make maple cream by boiling syrup, stirring it to a thick consistency. Try slathering that on an apple for a treat. One gallon of syrup will give you 8 pounds of maple cream. Or maple candy can be made by boiling syrup to a specific temperature and pouring it into molds for clear candy or stirring it till it becomes thick and creamy to yield a soft candy. You might say maple sap is the original treat we sharpened our American sweet tooth on.

Get out and enjoy a maple pancake breakfast, you'll hike better and celebrate a local product.



These buckets are collecting maple sap in Chesterfield.



Close up photo of spike (tap device drilled in 1 to 1 1/2 inch into tree to collect sap.



Clear sap water collected in the bucket.



This poster shows grades of maple syrup.

News, photo publication policy

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

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

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



This photo shows variation in maple syrup color.

Turley Photos by Deborah Daniels



## SCHOOLS & YOUTH

# Gateway Regional expands Barr Foundation scope district-wide

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – As reported last all, Gateway Regional High School was one of eight New England schools to receive a one-year, \$100,000 “Meeting the Moment” planning grant from the Barr Foundation, located in Boston with a goal of reimagining the high school experience for students attending Gateway Regional High School.

Barr is a non-profit “investing in human, natural and creative potential” that funds projects in the areas of education, climate change, arts and creativity, and mobility. Early on, Superintendent Kristen Smidy and her steering group started to see this as an opportunity to transform the entire district. “We were open with them and asked if we could consider transformation for our whole district. They were very supportive of this idea and allowed us to use grant funds to expand our survey to elementary and middle school students, families and staff; fund elementary and middle school teachers, administrators and stakeholders to attend trips and also invited elementary and middle school staff to their annual convenings. It has been really unifying for us as a district to imagine transformation for PreK - 12. We acknowledge that it will likely look different at the various levels, but there is true, deep excitement for what this opportunity is providing for our whole district.”

Beginning with a “learn phase,” the Barr Foundation put forward surveys of students, staff, families and stakeholders and conducted school and classroom observations from a visiting team. As need areas bubbled up from the assessments, the Barr Foundation suggested a few need areas and recommended a number of schools across the country, known for their exemplary practice in those areas.



Gateway staff visited several schools in Colorado over the February break. Shown from left are Linda Hyjek, Martha Gendron, Ryley Carleton, Jenna Kakimoto, Jen Bak and Val Zeh and back row, Kylie-blu Crawford, Martha Clark, Heather Cabral, Susan Addis, Daniel Rose, Stephanie Conway and Deanna LeBlanc.

Submitted photo

Gateway-now deep into the “dream phase” of this process, began traveling to districts throughout the country, all of which is paid for by the grant.

“We are intentionally visiting high schools, middle schools and elementary schools during this dream phase and it has been really inspiring to learn from all different levels and see many models for learning,” said Smidy. “For example, our trip to Colorado during February break included 13 staff members to see three schools: two of the schools were elementary schools and seven of the staff who attended were elementary teachers. The trip to Portland saw a high school and an elementary school and included a (Gateway) elementary principal, our school committee chair, two high school teachers, two middle school teachers, a paraprofessional, a district special education teacher and me,” said Smidy. When all is said and done, Gateway will have sent 60 teachers, parents and students-who will attend day trips to geograph-

ically closer schools-on these visits.

Expanding the focus to the entire district seems well appreciated by the faculty. At a recent meeting of Gateway’s steering committee-which on average meets every two weeks-high school mathematics teacher Cheryl Wright spoke about the work thus far. “I have been teaching for 27 years; after a while you get mired in your practice,” Wright said. “I was in an elementary school yesterday, which I’ve never had the chance to do.” Another committee member agreed, saying, “Inspired is the key word. Looking at other schools and having conversations with other districts and our staff. The other thing I really value is that it has been super inclusive, involving the whole district, not just the high school.”

The purpose of the school visits, which conclude in April, is to see how other schools have transformed themselves and to be inspired by best practice, although Smidy notes that they are not looking to “copy and paste.” By the end of

this phase, team members will have visited elementary, middle and high schools in Arizona, Colorado, California, Maine and Massachusetts.

LeBlanc recently returned from visiting schools in the southwestern United States. “Each school was amazing for its own reasons, and my biggest take away was that when students’ voices were elevated, they were empowered to learn deeply and lead their own learning,” LeBlanc said.

The committee strives to be clear with everybody about what the Barr Foundation is and is not. For example, the \$100,000 award cannot go toward the new roof or be used to offset the budget. But, the team says, it is important for people to understand that they are really diving deeply into answering critical questions, as articulated by Curriculum Director Deanna LeBlanc. “How do we build a community that really cares? How do we personalize learning for students so that they can build a life that they love? How do we all work together with a clear sense of purpose?” LeBlanc posed, perhaps saving the biggest question for last, “How do we know what we need to do?”

In two weeks, team members will return to Boston for yet another intensive conference with the Barr Foundation that will kick off the third and final “plan phase,”where the group synthesizes results from their needs assessment with learning from the dream phase to create a plan, or proposal. This is due June 1 for a hoped for approval by July 1. Although, team members add, the Barr Foundation is dedicated to long term partnerships and continuous improvement. The June 1 plan will not be the end of the process.

“I want people to be wicked excited,” Smidy said. “This is a big deal and it’s awesome.”

## BLANDFORD

# Historical Society announces upcoming events

BLANDFORD – Cemetery Commissioner Peter Sparks and local author Melissa Hamm will present a discussion of the history of what is now Cobble Mountain Reservoir and watershed area.

Hamm’s book, “River of Time,” is set in a small New England community and draws from her great-great-grandmother’s and great-grandfather’s journals. Their farm was located in what is now the watershed area.

Sparks will provide history of the area and the work he has done to preserve several cemeteries on the Cobble

Mountain area.

The program is free and open to the public on Thursday, March 21 at 7 p.m. at the Historical Society Building at the top of Main Street.

The Thursday, April 24 program is a Journey through the roots of American popular music with singer/songwriter Jon Waterman. His presentation includes a slide show featuring characters and events that manifest the role of music in everyday life. The program is also at 7 p.m.

The Historical Society’s Blandford Summer Concerts begin

on Saturday, June 29 with the New England Swing Orchestra; Saturday July 13, the New England Woodwind Quartet, Saturday July 27, the Jose Gonzalez Trio; August 10 Dale Buchanan will Rock and Roll and the season concludes with the 29th Bel Canto Opera performance.

Historical Society President Chips Norcross said, “This will be yet another outstanding season of cultural events.” All events are at The White Church. For times and ticket information, people may visit the website at thewhitechurch.org.

# Town Clerk reminds residents about Annual Town Report

BLANDFORD – Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo reminds town officials about town reports.

If there are any town boards, committees or departments that have yet to submit their report for inclusion in the Annual Town Report, “They should do so immediately,” she said.

Reports should be filed with the Town Clerk by emailing townclerk@townof-blandford.com.

from page 1

## RESIDENT

The house had been condemned several years ago, but is still standing. Board chair Cara Letendre asked Town Administrator Michael Szlosek to contact the Board of Health regarding securing the property. She also asked him to let Police Chief Jennifer Dubiel know as well as Fire Chief Adam Dolby.

Green complimented the board on the cleanup job at the house on Main Street, but spoke about another house on Hayden Road that has accumulated a yard full of “anything you can think of”.

Letendre said there are other properties “that you just don’t see” that need attention as well.

### Water Department grant

Szlosek brought the board up to date on the Water Department grant. Department of Revenue Senior Deputy Commissioner Sean Cronin informed Szlosek that DOR is willing to extend the deadline to use the funds to Sept. 15 this year, with four conditions.

Both towns should agree to make no further equipment purchases, no funds “may be reclassified to pay for personnel services prior to Feb. 14, 2024;” the towns

will “jointly establish a schedule and budget for the shared Operator in Training to expend the remaining funds before Sept. 15” and the towns will “establish protocols” to keep the shared services going forward.

He met with the Water Commission and said there were concerns about how Chester’s department functions. “There are sticking points but I think we can get past it,” Szlosek said.

Board member Theodore Cousineau reinforced having a “face to face meeting.”

### Technology report

Szlosek gave the board Novus’s yearly review. Novus is the town’s Information Technology firm. The server needs to be replaced along with other improvements and security applications.

The total is about \$53,000, which is “down somewhat” from last year, according to Szlosek.

### Gateway assessment

The Gateway Regional School Assessment came in about “\$4,000 more” than anticipated, Szlosek said that \$1,569,382 is the bottom line for

Gateway. No exact figures were available for vocational education.

### Line item for building repairs

Board member Jeff Allen suggested a line item for building repairs, maintenance, for all town buildings. There is an account for the old Town Hall and the current Town Hall.

He also asked about the sprinkler system, which is still not functioning.

Discussion about the former town hall’s needs ensued regarding maintenance including paint and new windows.

### Culverts

Highway Superintendent David Waldron told the board of problems on Russell Stage Road near Sperry Road with a catch basin. Some of the gravel roads need material because of water. Culverts have been replaced on Huntington Road.

He also said that Clayton Therrien will be responsible for lowering the town’s flags when necessary.

The Gibbs Road culvert will be replaced this coming week, a process that started in 2018. He will notify Police and

Fire Departments that the road will be closed while the work is done.

Letendre told the board that she had forgotten to notify Holyoke of the town’s intention to march in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade so the town will not participate this year. “I take full responsibility,” said Letendre.

### Other business

The Highway Department labor union will start negotiations with the town soon. The Post Office septic back-up has been corrected.

He also reminded the board about the committee for the study for shared fire services and needs to let Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s Ira Brezinsky know who will be members.

The town is also in deficit spending for Snow and Ice and the board approved Szlosek to have the ability to sanction this.

The discussion on medical insurance costs continued and Szlosek updated the board on costs. All rates have increased just over 9 percent.

The board then had a unanimous roll call vote to go into executive session and not to reconvene.





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CHESTERFIELD

HCD holds free workshops for small business owners

CHESTERFIELD – Hilltown Community Development, 387 Main Road, is dedicated to increasing the economic development of the region and furthering the prosperity of local small businesses.

They will offer workshops in April on Zoom.

On Thursday, April 4 rom noon-1:30 p.m. on Zoom their will be a workshop entitled “Building Blocks of Marketing for Small Business Owners” by Robyn Lee Miller, MorningBird Media. This comprehensive workshop covers the essentials of marketing, tailored specifically for small businesses.

On Thursday, April 11 from noon-1:30 p.m. on Zoom, the subject will be “Social Media Marketing “by Robyn Lee Miller, MorningBird Media. There

will be a quick review about each of the Social Media platforms and their target markets, but most of this workshop will be focused on Facebook/Instagram and Meta.

On Thursday, April 18 from noon-1:30 p.m. on Zoom, the workshop will be “Creating, Building and Maximizing Your Brand and Utilizing it with Email Newsletters” by Dee Dice, Constant Growth Marketing and Consulting. Small business owners will dive into the art of brand creation, development, and optimization to stand out in today’s competitive online landscape.

On Thursday, April 25 from noon-1:30 p.m. on Zoom, the topic will be “Creative Marketing Beyond Social Media” by Dee Dice, Constant Growth Marketing and Consulting. Small busi-

ness owner will learn about creative and inexpensive ways to connect with new customers, craft unusual and memorable marketing ideas and network to partner and explore many places to find those ideal customers.

For more information, people may call Joan Griswold at 413-296-4536, extension 102 or email her at joang@hilltowncdc.org. All technical assistance services and classes are provided to Hilltown businesses free of charge. Hilltown Community Development’s free business assistance program is made possible through The Small Business Technical Assistance Program grant from the Mass Growth Capital Corporation. People may learn more about MGCC by visiting [www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org](http://www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org).

Rabies and microchip clinic set for April 13

CHESTERFIELD – On Saturday, April 13, the Chesterfield Fire Department will host a rabies and Microchip Clinic at the Fire Station, 5 North Road. All are welcome from any town. Pet owners are asked to leash all pets. Vaccinations and microchip implants are provided by the South Deerfield Veterinary Clinic

Costs are \$26 for rabies and \$65 for microchip. Payment must be cash or check only. People may call Westhampton/Chesterfield Animal Control Officer Kelli Wainscott with any questions at 413-695-8343.

RIVER RACES THROUGH CHESTERFIELD GORGE



The trees laid on the island were washed up there by the force of the river. There were mini waterfalls cascading down the mountains everywhere into the Westfield River.



The Westfield River rages through Chesterfield Gorge.

Turley photos by Deborah Daniels

NOTICE

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Huntington

**Phone Number:** 413-667-2279

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

**Owners/Manager Name:**  
Tara Grenier/Paul Grenier

*Meet  
Your  
Merchants*



**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.**

*Get to know*

## Hilltown Real Estate by Adams Realty

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

**Phone Number:**  
413-238-0300

**Website:**  
HilltownRealEstate.com

**Hours of Operation:**  
By appointment only

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

*Meet  
Your  
Merchants*



**How long have you been in business?**  
In business since 1995

**What makes you stand out from the competition?**  
Hilltown Real Estate by Adams Realty has the knowledge and experience to handle the unique challenges that affects buyers and sellers in Hilltown property sales.

**How long have you been in business?**  
Our years of experience is what makes your real estate transaction a smooth process.

**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.

*Get to know*

## Hilltown Sand & Gravel

**Location:**  
87 Worthington Rd., Huntington

**Phone Number:** 413-667-5789

**Hours of Operation:**  
Mon.-Fri. 7:30am-4:30pm; Sat. 8am-12pm

**Owners/Manager Name:**  
Hess, Nolt and Mast families

*Meet  
Your  
Merchants*



**How long have you owned your business?**  
4 years

**Tell us about your business.**  
We are a family owned gravel operation who are eager to meet your gravel needs. We endeavor to take the resources God has given us and turn them into usable products for the local community. We also carry unique stone for your top quality landscaping.

**What are you proudest of in your business?**  
Our primary goal is to glorify God. Secondly we ask to meet the sand

and gravel needs of our local neighbors. Your satisfaction is our goal!

**What’s new?**  
Multiple color landscaping stone, round river rock, driveway mixes, drainage pipe.



COME BROWSE OUR OPTIONS OF MULTIPLE COLORS AND SIZES OF LANDSCAPING STONE!



*Get to know*

## Maple Corner Farm

**Owners:**  
Leon and Joyce Ripley

**Location:**  
794 Beech Hill Rd., Granville, MA

**Phone Number:**  
413-357-8829

**Website:**  
maplecornerfarm.com

*Meet  
Your  
Merchants*



**How long have you owned the business?**  
Maple Corner Farm was founded in 1812. Since then, the farm has passed though eight generations of the Ripley family. Leon and Joyce and their three sons have owned and operated the farm since 1972.

**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, 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.

**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.







# MEET *your* merchants



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### Get to know SLN Law

**Location:** 26B Main Street  
Chester, MA 01011

**Phone Number:** 413-667-2322

**Website:** slnlaw.com

**Hours of Operation:**  
Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm

**Owners/Manager Name:** Emily Smith-Lee

**Meet Your Merchants**

**Tell us about your business:**  
Founded in 2009 by attorney Emily Smith-Lee, we bring combined decades of experience to the table, helping thousands of individuals and small businesses navigate complex legal landscapes involving business and employment law issues and estate planning. We have had an office in Chester since 2019. Emily’s family has had a farm in Chester since the 1960’s, and the hilltowns are central to her family. She opened a satellite office in Chester just before the pandemic because she had long observed, and been dismayed by, the absence of legal professionals in this area. Since then, we have helped many people in the hilltowns with estate planning, probate, employment and small business issues.

**What are you proudest of in your business?:** We are proud that most of our work, across all of our practice areas, helps “regular” people who might otherwise not know where to turn for legal assistance. We are also proud of the referral network we continue to build, that allows us often to provide access to high quality services where we cannot help directly.

**What’s new?** Emily was selected for the tenth year in a row for the Massachusetts Superlawyers list in 2023, and one of our associate attorneys, Jenna Ordway was selected for the fourth year in a row as a Superlawyers Rising Star. We now have four attorneys, in addition to Emily, serving our clients throughout Massachusetts, including two who specialize in estate planning and probate.

### Get to know Wolcott Realty

**Location:**  
142 Westfield Rd., (Rt. 20) Russell

**Website:**  
www.wolcottrealty.com

**Hours of Operation:**  
We will meet with you at our office or at your home and at your convenience!

**Realtor Agents:**  
Eva Best  
413-241-1848  
eva.best@comcast.net

Mary O’Connell  
413-218-4344  
moconnell25@comcast.net

Dorinne Rodriguez  
413 519 2976  
drod61@gmail.com

**Meet Your Merchants**

**How long have you been in business?**  
Wolcott Realty has served the Hilltown Community for more than 70 Years! Because we are local, we have great experience servicing the Hilltown market. We have agents who live and work in the Hilltowns.

**Let us help you buy or sell your home or business!**

## WILLIAMSBURG

## RUSSELL

**LIONS CLUB DONATES LECTERN TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX**

On Thursday, March 7 the Williamsburg Lions Club donated a wooden lectern to the new Safety Complex in Williamsburg. Shown in front row from left are Williamsburg Lions Club Treasurer Roy Beals and Police Chief Denise Wickland.; center is Lion Tamer Neal Bibeau and Officer Aimee Wallace and back row, Lions Past President Larry West, Deputy Fire Chief Daryl Springman, Officer Robert Reinke and Officer Peter Fisher.

*Photo by Jenn Burdick Photography*

## Council on Aging host free concert

RUSSELL – People may experience the joy of music with the PaxSax Quartet at the Russell Senior Center, 65 Main St. The concert is free and will be held on Friday, March 15 at 1:45 p.m. People will enjoy an hour of entertainment filled with a variety of music genres, including some Irish, old and new jazz, Americana, blues and more.

This event has been made possible in part by a grant from the Russell Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. People may call 413-862-6217 or visit <https://assets.grammarly.com/emoji/v1/1f3af.svg> for more information.

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OTIS

Easter egg hunt set for March 30

OTIS – An Easter egg hunt, free for Otis residents of all ages will be held Saturday, March 20 at 10 a.m. at the Otis Town Hall, One North Main Road.

It will be held rain or shine. Participants should bring a basket to collect their eggs. There will be a separate section for children under three years of age.

The Easter Bunny will be here. Participant should wear appropriate clothing and/or boots.

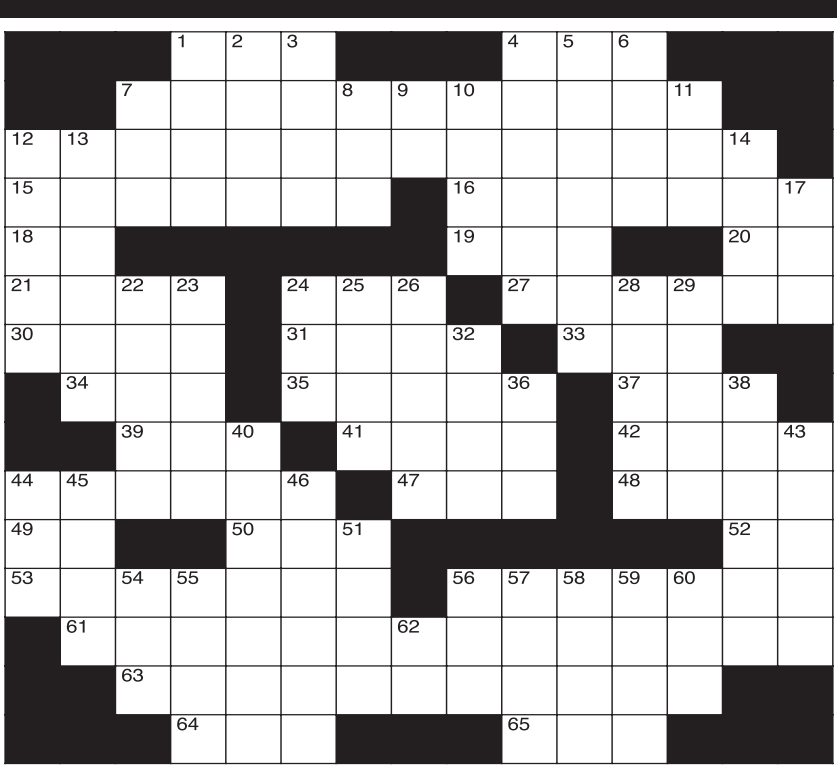
Cultural Council sponsors line dancing

EAST OTIS –The Otis Cultural Council will sponsor free line dancing with Tina on Friday, March 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Knox Trail Inn, 1898 East Otis Road.

There will be country line dance instruction from 7:30-8:30 p.m. with the free dance to follow.

People may to dinner before the free dance.

Reservations recommended by calling 413-269-4400.



- CLUES ACROSS**

  - 1. Helps little firms
  - 4. Political action committee
  - 7. Allowed
  - 12. Olivia Colman played one
  - 15. Open
  - 16. He had a notable lamp
  - 18. Promotional material
  - 19. Domesticated animal
  - 20. Larry and Curly's buddy
  - 21. The best ever
  - 24. TV network
  - 27. Checked for
  - 30. Dry or withered
  - 31. Expression of annoyance
  - 33. Dash
  - 34. Fifth note of a major scale
  - 35. A secret clique
  - 37. Partner to
- CLUES DOWN**

  - 1. Prevent from
  - 39. \_\_\_ school: where to learn healing
  - 41. City in ancient Syria
  - 42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
  - 44. Established practice
  - 47. Thanksgiving side dish
  - 48. District in Peru
  - 49. It's becoming more prevalent
  - 50. State in India
  - 52. Measure of illumination
  - 53. Raised platform
  - 56. Japanese warrior
  - 61. R.L. Stevenson novel
  - 63. Transitory
  - 64. Advanced degree
  - 65. Fiddler crabs
- CLUES ACROSS**

  - 2. Czech city
  - 3. \_\_\_ and Andy, TV show
  - 4. A young pig
  - 5. Removed surgically
  - 6. Covered with (slang)
  - 8. Nigerian City
  - 9. Midway between south and east
  - 10. A way to shut
  - 11. Stop playing
  - 12. Marshy places
  - 13. Takes apart
  - 14. Ten cents
  - 17. A gesture of assent
  - 22. Scent
  - 23. Teletypewriter
  - 24. General's assistant (abbr.)
  - 25. Hillside
  - 26. Taxi driver
  - 28. Semitic Sun god
  - 29. Town in India
  - 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
  - 36. Fugitives are on the \_\_\_
  - 38. Type of dance
  - 40. Two letters, one sound
  - 43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
  - 44. Golf score
  - 45. Mayhem
  - 46. Drenched
  - 51. River in northeastern Asia
  - 54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
  - 55. Part-time employee
  - 56. A very large body of water
  - 57. Aboriginal people of Japan
  - 58. Millisecond
  - 59. Forearm bone
  - 60. Subway dweller
  - 62. Royal Mail

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

- ARIES**  
Mar 21/Apr 20

Creativity may prove elusive this week, Aries. You want to get into a crafty project but you simply can't find traction just yet. Don't give up too soon.
- CANCER**  
Jun 22/Jul 22

Romantic matters are going very well right now, Cancer, even if you may not feel entirely confident. The person who cares for you will not notice your insecurities.
- LIBRA**  
Sept 23/Oct 23

You may be in the mood to expand your knowledge on one or more subjects. Visit the library or a bookstore and pick up something.
- CAPRICORN**  
Dec 22/Jan 20

Information coming to you could have you feeling nervous about your financial security, Capricorn. If this is outside your area of expertise, you may want to sit down with a planner.
- TAURUS**  
Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, a distracted friend or loved one may not be good company over the next few days. Reach out and offer to be a sounding board to help this person re-center their focus.
- LEO**  
Jul 23/Aug 23

The more challenging path may prove the best one to take as your work on a certain task, Leo. Dig in and start figuring a way out to the other side.
- VIRGO**  
Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, there is so much to do around the house that you may not know where to start. Spring cleaning comes a month or two early. Ask for help if you're feeling frazzled.
- GEMINI**  
May 22/Jun 21

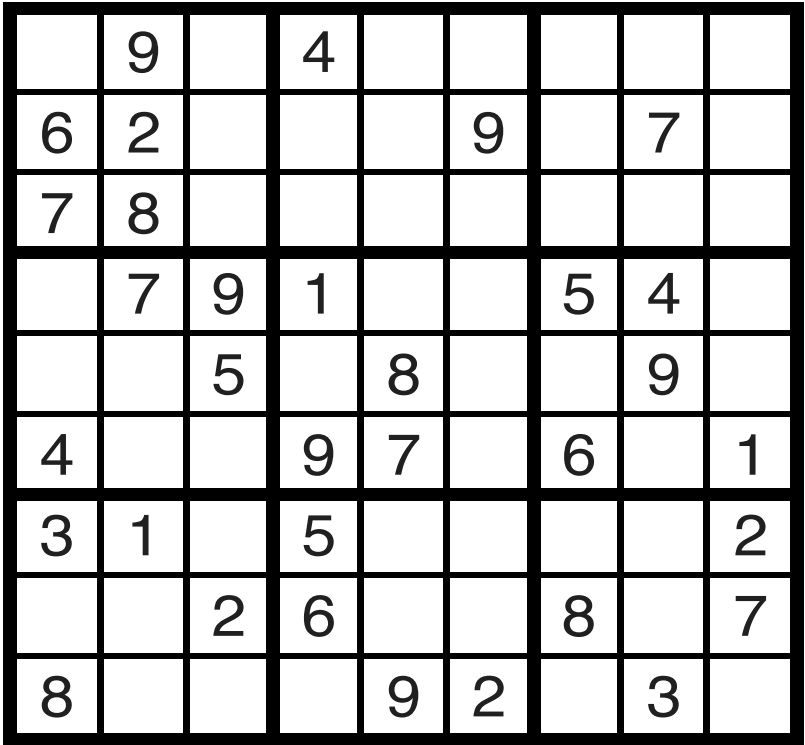
Are you feeling preoccupied, Gemini? You can't seem to focus on one thing or another and friends will start to notice when you are in their company.
- SCORPIO**  
Oct 24/Nov 22

You may pick up on some vibes when hanging out with others that just don't fit in with your line of thinking. Give it some time before you cut any ties. You may be misinterpreting.
- SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov 23/Dec 21

There has been a lot going on in your life, Sagittarius. You may be experiencing some apprehension about the future. Take every concern individually and give it thought.
- AQUARIUS**  
Jan 21/Feb 18

Confusing messages from work may find you reconsidering plans that you already put into motion, Aquarius. Get more information before modifying your plans.
- PISCES**  
Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, your mind is all over the place right now, so it could be difficult to focus on mundane things like chores or other activities right now. However, don't push them off.



SUDOKU

**Here's How It Works:**

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

**Fun By The Numbers**

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

answers

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

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## NORTHAMPTON

### Three County Fair announces food drive to be held April 13

NORTHAMPTON – The Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden Agricultural Society, the non-profit organization that manages the Three County Fair and fairgrounds, will be conducting their 2024 Food Drive on Saturday, April 13 outside of their main office at 54 Fair St.

The fair is seeking non-perishable foods such as canned fruit, vegetables and tuna, plus cereal, pasta, pasta sauce and peanut butter for area food pantries, who have partnered with the air. This year’s recipients include the Providence Ministries – Margaret’s Pantry in Holyoke, the Easthampton Community Center, the Franklin County Community Meals Program in Greenfield, the Helping Hands Cupboard Food Pantry in Belchertown and the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ food pantry.

“Food insecurity continues to negatively impact so many individuals and families throughout our region” said Tom Smiarowski, President of the Society. “The pantries that we partner with are doing heroic work helping those in need due to the increased demand for assistance

they experience every day. And the Three County Fair is pleased to play a role in supporting their efforts.”

Each vehicle that donates a minimum of ten in-date items will be supplied with a pair of complimentary tickets to the 2024 Three County Fair, Aug. 30 – Sept. 2. Donations can be dropped off at the Fair’s main office at 54 Fair Street in Northampton on Saturday, April 13 between the hours of 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The air requests that donations be compiled in disposable bags or boxes for volunteers to easily accept them from vehicles.

Located in Northampton, Massachusetts and incorporated in 1818, the Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden County Agricultural Society promotes agriculture, agricultural education, agricultural science and sustainability for the region through exhibitions, displays, competitions and demonstrations and annually operates

The Three County Fair, recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture as the oldest on-going Fair in continuous operation in the U.S.A, with the first Three County Fair taking place, October 14-15, 1818 and every year since without interruption.



## PITTSFIELD

### Berkshire Environmental Action Team to hold online public information session

PITTSFIELD – Free-flowing waterways provide better habitat for many wildlife species especially cold-water fish species.

Culverts, those concrete, metal, or plastic pipes or other conduits, that carry streams and rivers under roadways-can be a detriment and obstacle to fish and other aquatic animals, often preventing them from freely moving upstream or downstream. A major problem with many culverts is that they were not designed with wildlife in mind or as a priority. The culverts are often too small, restricting nutrient flow and causing flooding; other times, they might be “perched,” meaning they’re elevated above the water’s surface, making fish migration difficult at best and sometimes impossible.

For this reason, Berkshire Environmental Action Team has been working to survey stream crossings in Berkshire County using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative protocol. During spring 2024, BEAT will offer training to anyone interested in conducting volunteer fieldwork by surveying culverts and road-stream crossings throughout the county. These surveys help determine what cul-

verts and crossings need attention and prioritize the ones that need to be fixed sooner rather than later.

People are invited to join UMass Extension Professor Scott Jackson for this BEAT organized online information session about the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative on Tuesday, March 19 at 6 p.m. Participants will earn why the NAACC was formed, the importance of doing this work and what the training will entail. They may register by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/NAACC-info-session>.

This work is made possible by the Berkshire Cold, Clean, Connected partnership, a collaboration of the following organizations: Housatonic Valley Association, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Hoosic River Watershed Association, Farmington River Watershed Association, Berkshire Environmental Action Team and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. This partnership develops ecological restoration projects in Berkshire rivers and streams that protect cold-water fisheries, remove barriers to aquatic connectivity and enhance clean, healthy rivers throughout Berkshire County.

## OBITUARIES

### Susan Elanor Cross, 77

HUNTINGTON – Susan Elanor Cross, 77, passed away peacefully on March 8, 2024.

She grew up in West Springfield and settled in Huntington in 1972 where she lived the rest of her life. She was born Jan. 15, 1947 to the late Harrison and Mildred (Whitehead) Cross. Susan graduated from West Springfield High School.

For many years she worked as a veterinary technician in the Northampton area.

She is survived by her sister, Lorie C. Thomas of West Springfield; her brother, James H. Cross and his wife Elise (Sawtelle) of Manchester, Connecticut; her twin nephews Justin W. Thomas of Northampton and Derrek J. Thomas and his wife Kristin (Weece), great nephew and niece Benjamin and Grace of Hayden, Idaho and many cousins.

She spent many happy summers at the family



cottage on Otis Reservoir in East Otis. Susan had an exceptionally outgoing personality and had numerous friends. She enjoyed spending time with the elderly in shared conversation about their past experiences. Susan enjoyed drives in the Hilltowns which provided a source of peace for her.

Instrumental in providing support during Susan’s long illness was home health aide, Michelle Sivard and close friend. David Norton.

Funeral services will be on Thursday, March 14, 2024 at Firtion Adams Funeral Service, 76 Broad St. Westfield. Calling hour will be from 11 a.m.-noon and a service at noon. In lieu of flowers the family asks that you consider a donation to Gould Farm, 100 Gould Road, Monterey, MA 01245, [www.gould-farm.org](http://www.gould-farm.org). [www.firtionadams.com](http://www.firtionadams.com).

### Catherine Louise (Downes) Granger, 86

Catherine Louise (Downes) Granger, 86, longtime resident of Worthington, died Feb. 27, 2024 at the Springside Nursing and Rehabilitation Home in Pittsfield.

Catherine fought a long and admirable two year battle against Congestive Heart Failure. The CHF led to a multitude of serious side illnesses which made treatment long, painful and challenging for Catherine. Throughout her end of life journey she never, not once, complained about her aches, pains or ailments. The heart disease which finally took her life, could not diminish the size of her spiritual heart and the continued, selfless giving she provided for Kenneth and their family.

Catherine was an amazing homemaker and long-time school bus driver. She loved doing word searches and puzzles. She loved hosting holiday dinners and summer picnics. She was a proud homesteader with many self-sufficient skills all passed on to her children.

Catherine was born on June 3, 1937 in Westfield. She was the daughter of Joseph and Lena (Otto) Downes.

On August 20, 1955, Catherine married Kenneth M. Granger. They would have celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary this year. Kenneth who was in



the same nursing home, stayed with Catherine and held her hand for the final days of her life. They built their own home in Worthington and over the years raised five children.

Survivors include her husband Kenneth, four daughters: Deborah Wolfram, Charlene Granger, Diane Rushford (Ronald) and Melissa Porter (Michael). She also

leaves an only son, Eugene Granger (Darlene). Seven grandchildren, Jeremy Wolfram, Heather Gagnon, Rebecca Gagnon (Scott), Vanessa Farrell (Jason), Annette Cunningham (Tim), Alex Porter and Blake Porter (Korin). Also eight great-grandchildren, Jeremy Wolfram, Jr., Ben Wolfram, Caleb Gagnon, Kylie Jones, Aidan Jones, Keegan Farrell, Althea Farrell and Charlie Rose Porter, along with several nieces and nephews. She was also predeceased by two sisters, Roberta Kolsti and Anna Seymour.

There will be no wake or funeral services. Burial or committal of ashes will be at the convenience of her family.

In lieu of flowers, suggested donations are for the Hilltown Elder Network, 387 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA 01012 or to the Worthington MA Police or Fire Departments.

## DEATH NOTICES

### CROSS, SUSAN ELANOR

Died March 8, 2024  
Funeral Service March 14 at noon  
Calling hours March 14 11 a.m.-noon  
Firtion Adams Funeral Service

### GRANGER, CATHERINE LOUISE (DOWNES)

Died Feb. 27, 2024  
Burial or committal of ashes  
will be at the convenience of her family

## 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 \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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



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## HELP WANTED

**CLASS A DRIVER.** Triaxle dump trailer work. Local deliveries, minimum 40 hours, rate based on experience. **RB Enterprises, Ludlow, MA. 413-583-8393.**

**HEAVY EQUIPMENT MECHANIC.** Construction equipment and trucks. Experience required, full time. **RB Enterprises, Ludlow, MA. 413-583-8393.**

## HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

The Town of Brookfield is seeking an experienced full-time Highway Superintendent. Full job description at **brookfieldma.us**. Please submit resume and cover letter to **selectmen@brookfieldma.us**. Application review will begin after March 28th. Resumes accepted until position is filled. Brookfield is an equal opportunity employer.

**SQUIER & CO.** is looking to hire an oil truck driver. \$40,000-\$60,000 full time. Squire will provide CDL school for the right candidate! **Email: squieroil@verizon.net. Call 413-267-3184** or visit us at 5 Squier Ave., Monson, MA. Monday-Friday.

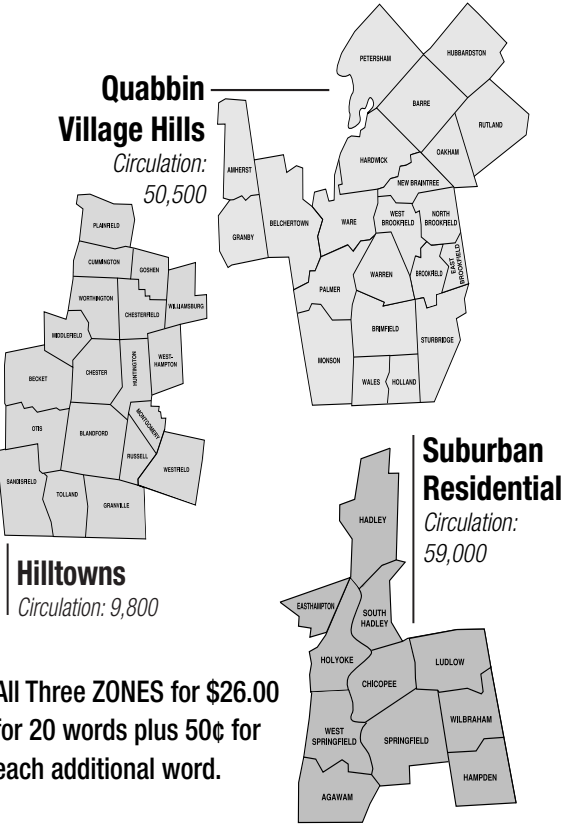
The Town of Huntington is seeking a part-time **HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** for 16 hours per week. Applicants must be proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook. Hours are flexible, but must be worked during the regular highway department hours of Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to assist the Highway Superintendent. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Weeks: \_\_\_\_\_ X per week rate = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card: ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ Discover ☐ Cash ☐ Check# \_\_\_\_\_  
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WORTHINGTON

Worthington Library collaborates with Hilltown Family Center

WORTHINGTON – The Hilltown Family Center in collaboration with the Worthington Library expands its free programs for families with young children.

Mondays, the Hilltown Family Center holds from 8:30-9:30 a.m. an infant group for birth to nine months and from 9:45-11 a.m. a play group for nine months to five years in the children’s room of the library located at One Huntington Road. This is a great opportunity for both new parents and caregivers with a little more experience. The family center coordinator will greet families at the library door.

These two programs will bring together mothers, fathers, grandparents and other caregivers of children

to meet and support each other in the community, learn about child development and connect their children with the Hilltown Family Center and its many programs including: The ASQ developmental screening program, Hilltown Holiday Help, Ready4K learning messages, ParentChild plus home visit literacy program, Rise and Read Book bag program and Parent education, as well as services and referrals through Hilltown Community Health Center.

The Family Center Coordinator will have circle time with a book, songs and fun movement activities as well as a weekly craft. Children will begin to learn routines around transitions during the group. This is an opportunity for young children to socialize with other children

and for families in the community to meet and support each other in learning and parenting.

The Family Center Coordinator models adjusting the challenge level for each child and encourages an environment of problem solving and extending children’s thinking. Parent education workshops help families learn more about child development and parenting strategies such as understanding communication and language development or handling challenging behavior.

For more about this program or the Hilltown Family Center, people may visit their Facebook page at Hilltown Family Center or Parent & Family Supports – Hilltown Community Health Center at hchcweb.org, call Susan LeBarron,

Hilltown Family Center Coordinator at 413-667-2203 or email slebarron@hchcweb.org.

This program is made possible through the Hilltown Family Center through a Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, The United Way of Hampshire and Franklin Counties and in collaboration with the Worthington Library.

The Hilltown Family Center, located at 9 Russell Rd in Huntington, houses many of the Hilltown Community Health Center’s community programs and services and offers an extensive list of resources for parents, caregivers, and families.

Parks and Rec hosts square dance

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Parks and Rec will sponsor a square dance on Saturday, March 23 from 7-10 p.m. at the Worthington Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road.

The Falltown String Band will

provide music. Lila West will be calling. Refreshments will be provided. People of all ages and experience are welcome. For more information, people may email Ashley Tompkins at agtompkins24@aol.com.

Volleyball offered at Town Hall

WORTHINGTON – Volleyball sponsored by the Worthington Parks and Rec will be held on Fridays during the month of March from 7-9 p.m. for fifth grade and up at the Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road.

Parents are welcome to stay and play or drop children off. They must sign a waiver to play.

This is not a school sponsored event. People may email agtompkins24@aol.com for more information.

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**TOWN OF CHESTER**  
**WATER COMMISSION**

The Chester Water Commission will hold a Public Hearing on **April 5, 2024** at Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield St, Chester at 6:pm for operational update & discussion of FY’25 Water Rate/03/07, 03/14/2024

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**TOWN OF HUNTINGTON**  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) of the Town of Huntington will hold 3 public hearings on **March 26, 2024 beginning at 6:00 pm** in Stanton Hall.

The first Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:00 pm for the Special Permit Application of Rob LeClair DBA Archimedes Plumbing and Heating Inc., under Huntington Zoning

Bylaw Sections IV.E: Multiple Uses on a Lot; IV.H: Off-Street Parking; IV.I: Signs, and V: Special Permits at 70 Worthington Road, Assessors Map #N-1, parcel #5-0 in the garage portion of the former Huntington Country Store.

The second Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:15 pm for the Special Permit Application of Rob LeClair DBA Hilltown Cafe Inc., under Huntington Zoning Bylaw Sections IV.E: Multiple Uses on a Lot; IV.H: Off-Street Parking; IV.I: Signs; IV.D.2.a. Cafe and V: Special Permits at 70 Worthington Road, Assessors Map #N-1, parcel #5-0 in the store/restaurant portion of the former Huntington Country Store.

The third Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:30 pm for the Special Permit Application of Adam Ragazzini DBA Absolute Detailing, under Huntington Zoning Bylaw

Sections IV.C. Category 2: Slight Effect on the Residential Character of the Neighborhood; IV.I: Signs, and V: Special Permits at 4 Harlow Clark Road, Assessors Map #444, parcel #101-0 (home of Shirley St. Peter in her garage)

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
**TOWN OF HUNTINGTON**  
03/07, 03/14/2024

**LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**  
**WILLIAMSBURG CONSERVATION COMMISSION,**  
**Williamsburg MA**

The Williamsburg Conservation Commission, in accordance with MGL Chapter 13 I, Section 40, the Wetlands Protection Act, will hold a public meeting on **Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Williamsburg town offices, 141 Main St., Haydenville, MA to review at

**Request for Determination of Applicability** submitted by Snow Farm. The subject area or activity is located at 5 Clary Road, Williamsburg, MA 01096. 03/14/2024

**Town of Goshen**  
**Conservation Commission**  
**Notice of Public Meeting**

The Goshen Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting under the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chapter 131 Section 40) on **April 1, 2024 at 6:30 PM** at the Goshen Town Offices to review a **Request for Determination** filed by George Propane, Inc. for 59 Cape St., Goshen MA. The work to be reviewed is construction of a 220 ft. x 220 ft. canopy, with associated tree clearing, grading, and storm-water management features. 03/14/2024

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

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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

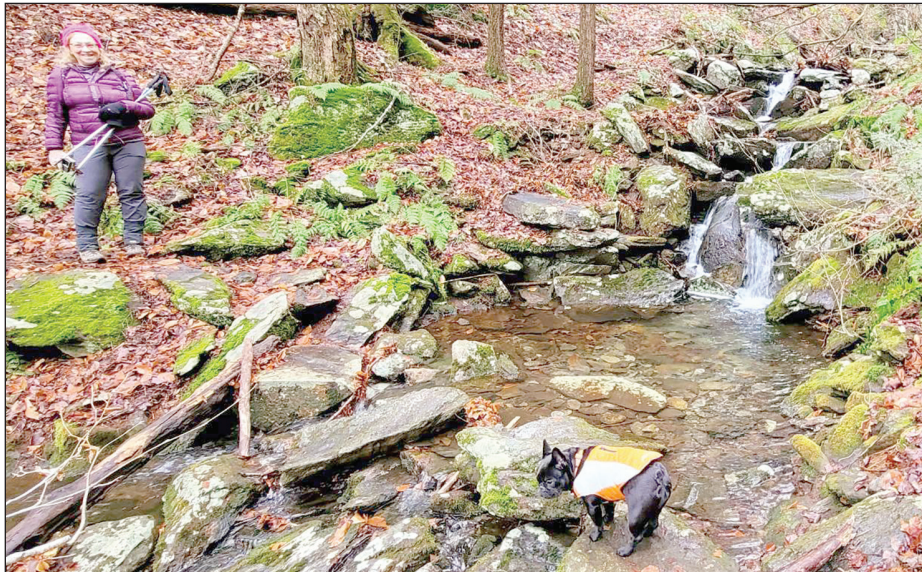
## Hikers trek with Chester Blandford State Forest



Western Mass Hilltown Hikers start up the H. Newman Marsh Trailhead.



The Western Mass Hilltown Hikers canine buddies, Cybill and Frankie appreciate the new dog bridge installed by Ranger Mike Skala of the Department of Conservation and Reservation.



Nancy takes a break after the waterfall crossing and waits for dog Frankie.



Hikers enjoy the vista on the Newman Marsh Trail.



Quartz outcrops appear on the Memorial Trail.

Submitted photos

## Western Mass Hilltown Hikers hold group hike

The Western Mass Hilltown Hikers will hold a group hike on the East Branch Trail to Bakers Dam in Chesterfield Saturday, March 23 at 10 a.m.

The hike has a moderate rating due to length, approximately six miles in to the Dam and back, with an option of a shorter turn around point.

Parking is at 22 River Road at the Chesterfield Gorge Parking Area. Participants will hike to Baker Dam

and saw mill remains starting at the Chesterfield Gorge. Built in 1848 by Lemuel Baker, a saw mill was erected at mile marker three on the East Branch Trail in Chesterfield. The mill used an undershot waterwheel to produce its power.

A dam was located here but it no longer exists due to raging flood waters on the East Branch of the Westfield River however metal pins can still be seen on

the rocks at the waters edge. After 21 years of use both the dam and mill were destroyed by flood waters in 1869 and were never rebuilt.

The group will hike along the wild and scenic East Branch trail along the river with rolling terrain into the Gilbert Bliss State Forest, passing an old quarry site and continuing on to the old mill site.

Participants should register per car by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com>. Maps and bottled water will provided. Hikers should be prepared for rocks, roots and some uneven ground. They will hike rain or shine. Friendly dogs are welcome.

Suggested donation is \$10. The hike is volunteer lead. For more details people may visit [www.hilltownhikers.com](http://www.hilltownhikers.com), email [westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com](mailto:westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com) or call/text 413-302-0312 if they have any questions.