

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

March 19, 2026 | Vol. 47, No. 47 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

HUNTINGTON



Highway Superintendent Brad Curry, from left and Finance Committee Chair Eric Jensen discuss the department's request for a capital debt exclusion to replace highway Truck #2. Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Capital requests dominate Select Board meeting

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Huntington Select Board met on Wednesday, March 11 with all members, Chairman Roger Both, Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh present, along with Town Administrator Jennifer Pelouin.

Their meeting opened with two executive sessions to discuss personnel matters that ran 58 minutes.

At 6 p.m., the Select Board began a series of meetings with departments that were proposing debt exclusion requests for equipment. This portion

of the meeting was joined by finance committee members Eric Jensen and Bonnie Boguszewski.

"A replacement engine is critical to maintain operational readiness..."

– Fire Chief
Josh Ellinger

As explained by Pelouin, paying for capital items through a debt

exclusion allows the town to get a loan for a large item and allows for the loan payments to exceed the town's levy limit. The exclusion increases the amount of property tax revenue a community may raise for a limited period of time in order to fund the specific item.

First up was Police Chief Brian Kowal who proposed replacing the 2018 Ford Explorer, which he said is reaching the end of its usable life. The best replacement option Kowal found was through MHQ Truck Equipment, which is offering a pickup truck

REQUESTS, page 3

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Gateway budget approval deferred to March 16

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Wednesday, March 11 meeting of the Gateway Regional School Committee opened on a positive note by announcing three awards earned by its special education staff.

Awards for 2026 were given out at the Western Massachusetts Sped Directors Association (in conjunction with the Massachusetts Sped Directors Association at their recent conference. "We are immensely proud of the recognition provided to our Special Education leaders," Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo later reflected. "Their dedication and skill make a tremendous difference to our students and fam-

ilies."

Pupil Services Director Kurt Garivaltis was named the Suburban/Rural Special Education Director of the Year. Assistant Pupil Services Director Chris Tamburrino was given the Transition Specialist of the Year, and current Business Manager Amy Mason received the Inclusion Specialist of the Year for her prior work with the district's program for visually impaired students. Jamie Camacho, the Massachusetts Director of Special Education, was on hand to bestow the awards.

Minutes later, that same award-winning Assistant Pupil Services Director position was announced as one of the cuts to the proposed FY '27 school budget.

Superintendent Melissa

Matarazzo gave a presentation on the latest proposed budget totaling \$18,619,761. She began by reminding the committee of the district's instructional vision and outlined the key budget drivers for the coming fiscal year, which included rising health insurance costs, retirement, contractual obligations and staffing needs and outgoing school choice.

With no new spending, a level service budget would have been up 8.4%, resulted in over a half million dollars in assessments each to Huntington and Blandford and fallen far short of the goal of bringing a budget to the towns that was only up 2.44% in total town assessments.

BUDGET, page 8



Gateway's Director of Pupil Services Kurt Garivaltis, from left, Assistant Pupil Services Director Chris Tamburrino, and former Coordinator/Teacher of the Visually Impaired Amy Mason were all honored recently at the Western MA Sped Directors Association. Garivaltis was named Suburban/Rural Special Education Director of the Year; Tamburrino named Transition Specialist of the Year; and Mason named Inclusion Specialist of the Year. Turley Publications Photo by Wendy Long

BLANDFORD

Fireworks to celebrate American's 250th party

The exciting news announced at the Monday, March 9 Select Board meeting came from the Historical Society.

The society is not waiting for July 4 to start America's 250 birthday party. Thanks to a generous anonymous individual, who made a donation for town fireworks, "we're kicking off the Independence Day festivities a whole week early," according to Historical Society Vice President Jane Rohman.

Actually, this was the only date available for the Historical Society to secure a fireworks display. "So, we're seizing the moment to start the celebration," she added.

Residents can plan to join friends and neighbors at the Blandford Fairgrounds on North Street for an evening of community, celebration and a "sky full of fire" as the

town kicks off America's big 250 with a bang. This will all happen Friday evening, June 26 at the Blandford Fairgrounds, times for opening the grounds will be announced shortly. People may bring a picnic supper, lawn chairs and the whole family.

There are plans underway to have a live band and local food and drink vendors

as the Historical Society is working in conjunction with the Blandford Fair. Vice President Greg Girard was also at the meeting and spoke about the potential of having "more of an event."

During the discussion with the Select Board, Historical Society Director Peter Langmore explained that the original donation is \$10,000 for about ten min-

utes of fireworks. An additional \$2,000 would provide 12 to 18 minutes while an \$3,500 in addition to the original donation, would provide a solid 18 to 20 minutes of display.

Donations can be made online at www.blandfordhistoricalsociety.org or email the society at hello@blandfordhistoricalsociety.org or call 413-848-0108.



Historical Society president Chips Norcross, vice president Jane Rohman and director Peter Langmore discuss the upcoming event. Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

BLANDFORD

Jacqueline Coury elected Select Board chairman

Members of the Select Board voted to elect Jacqueline "Jackie" Coury as the board's chair going forward.

The re-organization included keeping Theodore "T.J." Cousineau as member and Cara Letendre, clerk.

The board approved the Hilltown Community Ambulance Association contract for the coming fiscal year for \$65,853 to be paid quarterly with an additional assessment of \$3,951.18 for the Ambulance Replacement Fund.

The board approved a \$689 annual contract with Hewlett Packard for the town hall's copier.

The board acknowledged the action of the Department of Fish and

Game of acquiring 329 acres of wildlife habitat off Chester Road and the Massachusetts Turnpike. The current use of the property is open space and will remain as such. The area abuts Round Hill Cemetery, according to Cousineau.

Public access to the

COURY, page 7



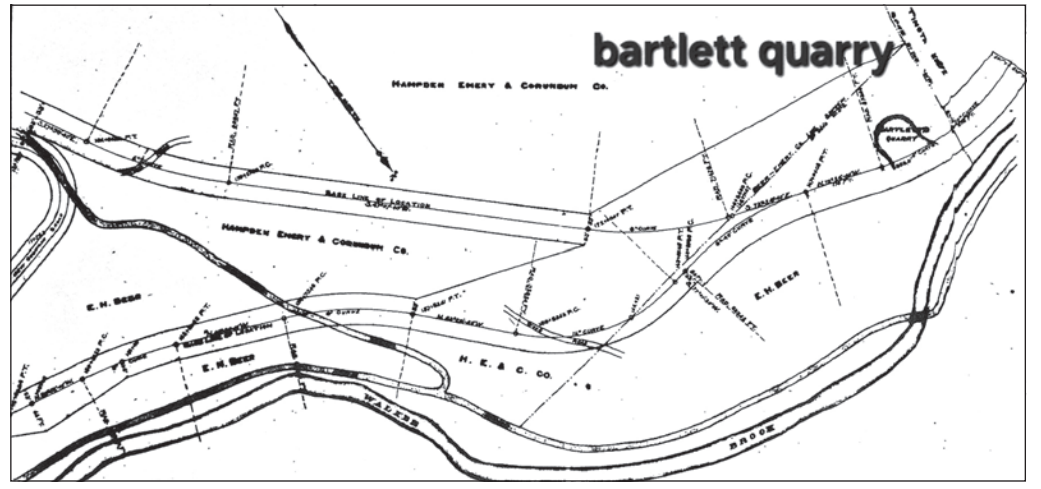
Becket.....3	Florence.....5	Middlefield.....3	Pittsfield.....6
Blandford.....6, 7	Great Barrington.....6	Monterey.....6	Schools & Youth.....8
Chester.....5	Haydenville.....2	Northampton.....3	Stockbridge.....11
Classifieds.....10	Hilltowns.....2	Obituary.....11	Washington.....9
Easthampton.....2	Huntington.....3	Opinion.....4, 5	Westhampton.....8



HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



This culvert on the Chester and Becket Railroad was made with Bartlett Quarry granite.



The Chester and Bartlett Railroad survey plan.

Hilltown Hikers visit Bartlett Quarry

The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers recently trekked to the Bartlett Quarry in Becket.

Granite was first discovered in 1878 by Joseph York of Hudson, New York in Becket, Massachusetts beginning with the "Bartlett quarry."

He later found a superior, mottled black-and-white deposit named "Snowflake" granite, which takes a high polish and creates high contrast for monument work. The Chester Granite Company was organized in November 1878 with \$50,000 capital, buying 300 acres total to develop the property. Bartlett Quarry operated before the Chester and Becket Railroad was built by bringing granite to the Chester Granite and Polishing Works by team.



Tom and Frankie the Frenchie discover the Bartlett Quarry on a recent Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers trek to the quarry.



A drill was left at the Bartlett Quarry.

Submitted photos

HILLTOWNS

MassDOT announces RFP for revamped service plazas

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces the start of a new procurement process for the rehabilitation, operation and maintenance of 18 highway service plazas across Massachusetts.

The procurement will be conducted in coordination with a Public Private Partnership (P3) Commission that will provide independent oversight throughout development of the Request for Proposals. The Commission is expected to be formed this spring.

"Service plazas and

the services they provide enhance safety for travelers from near and far, offering food, fuel, a place to rest and other amenities. MassDOT is committed to utilizing the best procurement method that can best facilitate robust interest and competition to deliver facilities that can best serve the needs of the traveling public," said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng. "We will seek industry input as we develop and issue this next contract opportunity, with clear expectations and criteria to deliver clean,

safe, and welcoming service plazas for all. The public deserves and expects a top-notch customer experience, and this best value procurement will make that a priority."

"This is the first public private partnership (P3) procurement the Commonwealth has undertaken for highway facilities, and our goal is to create a process that brings forward innovative proposals while delivering long term value for travelers and taxpayers," said Transportation Undersecretary and Highway Administrator Jonathan

Gulliver. "By structuring the plazas into multiple bundles, we are creating stronger competition and opening the door to new ideas that will modernize these facilities and deliver the best long-term value for Massachusetts."

MassDOT will host an Industry Day on March 25 to discuss the upcoming procurement with prospective operators, designers, builders, consultants and contractors. The session will provide an overview of the anticipated procurement structure and timeline.

MassDOT currently expects to release the Request for Proposals in summer 2026. Following the evaluation process, the recommendation(s) for award will be presented to the MassDOT Board of Directors. Transition to a new operator is expected to begin in early 2027, with new leases effective July 1, 2027.

Through this procurement, MassDOT aims to modernize all 18 service plazas to better serve residents and visitors while optimizing rent revenues. Improvements are expected to include expanded food

and beverage options, modern and accessible restrooms, travel and gift retail featuring Massachusetts related products and convenient fueling choices including gasoline, diesel and electric vehicle charging.

MassDOT will also launch a public outreach survey in conjunction with Industry Day. The survey will remain open from now through May 3 to capture feedback during spring vacation travel periods in Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont.

HAYDENVILLE

No Kings Rally set to take place March 28

HAYDENVILLE – A "No Kings Day Rally" will be held on Saturday, March 28 from 9:30-11 a.m. in front of the Williamsburg

Town Hall and Haydenville Congregational Church.

People wishing to participate should bring signs and flags.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

EASTHAMPTON

Friends of SHAEC to hold fundraiser on March 24

EASTHAMPTON – The Friends of Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center partnered with Nini's Ristorante at 124 Cottage St., for a delicious way to support Hilltown Adult Education on Tuesday, March 24 from 4-9 p.m.

That evening, 10% of all Nini's sales will go to support the Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center,

which has been serving low and moderate income Hilltowners in basic adult education, GED prep, computer literacy, business assistance, and sustainability classes since 1999.

This year, the Community Development Block Grant that funds SHAEC was not awarded to the Southern Hilltowns. Therefore, The Friends of

SHAEC have partnered with Nini's Ristorante for a delicious way to help SHAEC offer high quality free classes to Southern Hilltown residents while enjoying a great meal at Nini's. It's an easy and delicious way to support the Friends of SHAEC, while enjoying the great food of Nini's Ristorante.

People may learn more about SHAEC by visiting

www.shaec.org. Donations can be made directly to the Friends of SHAEC 26 Main St., Chester, MA 01011.

Nini's is a traditional Italian Eatery located in downtown Easthampton, serving delicious authentic Italian dishes since 1976. Grab some friends and head on out to Nin's for a delicious way to support SHAEC in Tuesday, March 24.

LOWER PRICES TO BOOST YOUR BUDGET!

INFLATION

PRICE BUSTERS

PRICES IN RED ARE AT OR BELOW LAST YEAR'S PRICES!

USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN PORK LOIN RIBEND or LOIN ROAST \$1.95 lb USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS..... \$2.05 lb USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS CENTER CUT PORK LOIN CUT FREE..... \$1.99 lb SLICED IN OUR DELI USDA INSP. TURKEY BREAST..... \$3.99 lb USDA INSP. MUENSTER CHEESE..... \$4.99 lb SOUP'S ON! USDA INSP. FRESH BEEF NECK BONES \$3.99 lb USDA INSP. FROZEN BEEF TRIPE..... \$2.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TENDERLOIN CUT FREE \$12.88 lb USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF CHUCK STEAK or ROAST \$6.19 lb USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF 7 LB BAG \$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. FOZEN CHICKEN WINGS TRAY PAK..... 88c lb USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS-SKINLESS CHICKEN BREAST 10 LB \$1.95 lb Denten Specials USDA INSP. FROZEN AT SEA BLUE CRAB SWIMMING RAW WHOLE CLEANED 2 LB BOX... \$12.99 ea USDA INSP. FROZEN CRAB CAKE BITES 10.8 OZ BOX..... \$2.99 ea USDA INSP. FROZEN • HEADS ON/TAILS ON JUMBO RAW SHRIMP 15/20 COUNT 1½ LB BAG \$6.99 ea 90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4 Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3 BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE
---	---	---

SALE DATES: 3/19/26-3/25/26

Adventure tours of Warren
Share the Adventure with us!

Two Great Cruises aboard Norwegian Breakaway!

June 9-12 4-Day Boothbay Harbor Vacation \$899
 June 27.....Lake George Cruise & Lunch \$185
 July 11Provincetown by Fast Ferry..... \$220
 July 198-Day Bermuda & Halifax Cruise.....from \$1699
 Aug 30.....8-Day Nova Scotia Cruisefrom \$1699

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

HUNTINGTON

Huntington gets PVPC grant for Community Engagement Strategy

HUNTINGTON – The town of Huntington received assistance from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's District Local Technical Assistance Program.

PVPC will assist the town in developing and delivering a Community

Engagement Strategy, which will result in a shared vision, set of values and goals to guide future development of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Members are needed for a five-member Visioning Committee to work on the project with PVPC.

Huntington residents,

who are interested in being part of the committee should email a letter of interest to admin@huntingtonma.us or drop it off at the Select Board office at Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, by Wednesday, April 1. Committee meetings and public listening sessions will be held throughout 2026.

REQUESTS

model outfitted as a police vehicle for \$82,110.25. It has a cage, light bar and siren. Kowal said the department could salvage existing laptop and radio equipment from the current vehicle and that there may be some interest from the Russell Fire Department in purchasing the explorer.

Huntington's Police Department has a portion of each detail fee go into an account to help replace vehicles. He did not yet know how much money had accumulated in that account. Booth suggested they plan on a cost of \$60,000 after the sale of the Explorer and the use of detail account funds.

Highway Superintendent Brad Curry was next up with a debt exclusion request for a new dump truck and salt shed. He said that Truck #2 has been on the list to be replaced for four or

five years; and that Truck #4 will be paid off this year.

Truck #2 is starting to cost us a lot in repairs, totaling \$16,000 in the last two years and needs more presently, Curry said. Hathaway remarked that the truck only has 44,000 miles on it and even the repairs are less than the debt or lease payments; Curry acknowledged that they could possibly get one or two more years on the truck. After discussing close quotes between Freightliner and Allegiance, getting pricing for the next class down and the need to run a cost benefit analysis of a municipal lease option, this will be looked at again.

Fire Chief Josh Ellinger closed this section of the meeting with a request to bond \$1,126,000 for a new fire truck to replace Engine 2, a 1996 Freightliner/KME

pumper (1250 GPM, 1,000 gallon tank) including all equipment, accessories and incidental and related costs. In making his case, Ellinger noted that the vehicle is now 30 years old, which far exceeds NFPA replacement recommendations.

Further, he said the vehicle experiences age-related mechanical failures, outdated safety features and reliability concerns.

"A replacement engine is critical to maintain operational readiness, meet current NFPA and OSHA safety standards, and ensure

Egg hunt to be held on March 29

HUNTINGTON – The Recreation Committee will hold an egg hunt on Sunday, March 29 at 11 a.m. at Pettis Field.

Children should bring a basket to collect the eggs. Rain date will be Sunday, April 12 at 11 a.m.

from page 1

reliable fire suppression capability for the Town of Huntington and its mutual aid partners," Ellinger wrote in his justification. Jensen asked Ellinger to provide a schedule of the fire department's vehicles.

In other Police Department business, Kowal has submitted a warrant article to address street parking and its effect on snow removal. Another bylaw already addresses the municipal parking areas behind Stanton Hall and off of Prospect Street, which may need to be amended.

BECKET

Becket Arts Center offers jewelry making workshop

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will offer a free up cycle jewelry making workshop on Thursday, March 19 from 6-8 p.m.

Instructor Mary Frances Millet will lead the participants in turn-

ing paper from old books and magazines, handmade paper or origami into earrings, pendants and more. All ages are welcome; donations are welcome as well. For information and optional registration, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

MIDDLEFIELD

Town Hall hosting rabies vaccine clinic

MIDDLEFIELD – The town of Middlefield will be hosting a rabies vaccine clinic on Saturday, March 21 from 1-3 p.m. at the Middlefield Town Hall, 188 Skyline Trail.

No appointments are necessary. All towns are welcome. Vaccines are \$20 per pet, cash or check. Pets

must be in a carrier or on a leash.

If possible, people should bring a prior rabies certificate. Vaccines will be given by Dr. Sharon Lynch from Hilltown Veterinary Clinic. Dog licenses for the residents of Middlefield will also be available during this clinic.

NORTHAMPTON

Three County Fair to hold annual food drive April 11

NORTHAMPTON – The Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden Agricultural Society, the non-profit organization that manages the Three County Fair and fairgrounds, will be conducting their annual food drive on Saturday, April 11 outside of their main office at 54 Fair St.

The Three County Fair has collected over 2,000 lbs in food donations each year to contribute to local food banks. The fair is seeking non-perishable, non-expired foods such as canned fruit, soup, tuna and vegetables, plus cereal, pasta, sauce and peanut butter for area food

pantries, who have partnered with the Fair including the Northampton Survival Center, the Easthampton Community Center, the Helping Hands Cupboard Food Pantry at BUCC in Belchertown and the Westhampton Food Pantry located at the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ.

"The Three County Fair understands that our neighbors deserve food security no matter the time of year. Our annual food drive takes place in the Spring; we are honored to stock pantries at local food banks in our community with the help of our

Fair network." Taylor Haas, Executive Director.

People in a vehicle can donate at least 10 non-perishable and non-expired food items in exchange for a pair of complimentary tickets to the 2026 Three County Fair, Sept. 4 to Sept. 7. Donations can be dropped off at the fair's main office at 54 Fair St. between the hours of 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday, April 11. The fair requests that donations be compiled in disposable bags or boxes for volunteers to easily accept them from vehicles. There is limit one pair of tickets per vehicle.

Located in

Northampton 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, Oct.14-15, 1818 and every year since without interruption.

Find your MARKET IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!

413.283.8393 • classifieds@turley.com
24 Water St., Palmer • 80 Main St., Ware

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

NRA BASIC PISTOL COURSE WITH LIVE FIRE
For License To Carry Permit
\$140
Call For Class Dates/Details
413-537-0620 Matt Marcinkiewicz
muscione@hotmail.com

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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

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

FIVE ISLANDS
Georgetown, Maine
2 Bedrooms, 2 Bathroom
Washer/Dryer, Fully Equipped
• Walk to Five Islands Wharf and Ledgewood Preserve Beach
• Close to Reid State Park

\$1200/week
207-607-9333

FEED • PET SUPPLIES • CLOTHING • COAL
WOOD PELLETS • WILD & CAGED BIRDSEED
POOL SUPPLIES • MOTOR OILS • FENCING
LAWN & GARDEN SUPPLIES • FERTILIZER

GATEWAY FARM & PET
59 RUSSELL ROAD, HUNTINGTON, MA 01050
1-413-667-2279 M-F 8am-5pm Sat. 8am-4pm
TARA GRENIER • PAUL GRENIER

Kirke R. Henshaw, Inc.
Water Well Drilling, Water Pump Sales & Service

Water Testing • System Evaluations
Water System Repairs • Hydrofracture to Increase Flow

HENSHAW
800-232-4725 • Fax 413-296-4565
Charles R. Henshaw
130 Cummington Rd., W. Chesterfield, MA • 413-296-4725

Dale's Structural & Carpentry
Home Improvement • Additions • Restorations • Repairs

Post & Beam Repairs
Sagging Floors - Beams - Columns
Sill Timbers - Termite Damage
Foundation Repairs - Piers & Footings
Chimney Rebuilds

FULLY LICENSED & INSURED
Huntington, MA • 413-667-3149
dalesstructuralandcarpentry.com

DOWN TO EARTH EXCAVATING INC

Highly Regarded Professionals: Complete Site Work, Septic Development and Repairs. Fully Insured.
413+667+5269
Paul & Randy LaPointe, Owners Huntington, Mass.

NURSES: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CAREER & MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- ✓ Become a Private Patient Advocate
- ✓ High Pay | Rewarding Work | Flexible Schedule
- ✓ Online Training & Mentorship with Expert Guidance
- ✓ Help Patients Navigate the Healthcare System

BOOK A CALL TODAY WITH TERI FRYKENBERG

NURSE ADVOCATE ENTREPRENEUR
www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com

AQUA PUMPS WATER SYSTEMS

Water Pumps • Sewer Pumps
Water Conditioners

46 Pitcher Street Montgomery, MA 01085 Donald Washburn 862-3301

Jeff's Oil Burner Service

- Tune Ups
- Installations
- Oil Tanks

Huntington, Massachusetts
Office 413.667.0245
Cell 413.530.7037
jeffsoilburnerservice@hotmail.com

GUEST COLUMN

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



When will I get full credit for delaying my Social Security retirement?

Dear Rusty:

The time is nearing that I want to move from my current Social Security survivor benefit to my own SS retirement benefit at 70 years of age.

I have been looking more deeply into the application of Delayed Retirement Credits and I have read that DRCs accumulated in the year that I turn 70, September 2026, will not be effective when I actually turn 70. Rather, those DRCs won't be paid until the following year. Can you verify that this is correct? I presume that if the DRC's are not applied at age 70, that they will be applied sometime after the first of the year and any increase will be paid retroactively.

Signed: Retiring Soon

Dear Retiring Soon:

The Delayed Retirement Credits you speak of have accumulated at the rate of 8% per year (.667% per month) since you reached your SS Full Retirement Age, which means that at age 70 your monthly SS benefit will be about 129% of the amount you were entitled to at your FRA of 66 years plus 4 months.

However, your understanding of how DRCs will work for you at age 70 is not correct. If you claim for your Social Security retirement benefits to begin in September 2026 (the month you turn 70) you will receive all DRCs, you have accumulated up to that point in time. In other words, you will get your

full age 70 benefit amount immediately, including all DRCs earned until then, effective with your first SS retirement payment, which you will get in October 2026. What you have likely read about is that DRCs work a bit differently for those who claim SS after their full retirement age, but before their 70th birthday month.

For those who claim mid-year but before age 70, only DRCs earned through the end of the preceding year are initially applied and DRCs earned during the current year are not paid until the following January. This results in a loss of some SS benefit between the time benefits start and the following January, because only the amount earned as of the end of the previous year are first paid, and the full number of DRCs earned during the current year are applied in January.

But, as is the case for you, when benefits are claimed to start in the month you reach 70 years of age, all DRCs earned up to the month of your 70th birthday are immediately applied. Congratulations on selecting a strategy which will maximize your monthly Social Security benefit.

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.

Correction

A quote was mis-attributed to Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo in the Field Driver article in last week's Country Journal. She did not make the statement.

Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to countryjournal@turley.com, or call us at 413-283-8393. Corrections will be printed on page 4 or 5.

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

On the look out for a nice lawn

I'll be the first to admit that I don't have an especially nice lawn. Looking out the window further proves it.

It is early in the year and all, so the shades of brown I see are pretty common, but there are some lawns that are greening up nicely while mine is definitely not.

My mind always goes to thoughts of green as we approach St. Patrick's Day. I wonder if that's why my Irish dad enjoyed caring for his lawn so much?

One of his spring rituals was to rake it. I remember him out there working his way across the yard a little at a time, making pile after pile of dead grass, leaves and

small sticks.

This was the just the first job in a season's worth of work aimed at growing good turf. Chances are that once the ground dries a bit you'll be out there too, clearing the lawn of winter debris and enjoying some long awaited sun on your back. Find out what else you can do (and I should too) to achieve an attractive green-scape with a minimal commitment.

Don't mow so low, or as often. Mowing at a height of about three inches will encourage a healthy lawn. Why? Taller grass shades out developing weed seedlings.

It also makes large, established weeds more susceptible to mower damage (the more surface area of the weed that is removed, the more weakened it becomes.)

High mowing also fosters deep root growth. Deep roots sustain the lawn during periods of drought.

Keep mower blades sharpened for the cleanest possible cut.

Water efficiently and effectively. If you set up

GARDEN, page 5

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



A medical library at your fingertips



your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column



There's a lot of medical misinformation out there, much of it promulgated by non-medical individuals based on nothing more than assumptions and unwarranted conclusions.

But what if you could find published, peer-reviewed answers to your medical questions, written in everyday language? Good news. You can!

One of the speakers at the recent New England Patient Advocacy Conference I hosted at Assumption University in Worcester was Erika Warren, a partner in a new venture called Inciteful Med (IncitefulMed.com), just launched earlier this year. I wanted to share it with you because, as I like to say, knowledge is power. Inciteful Med lets you research a medical question and come to doctors' appointments ready

to have a meaningful discussion.

This is a beneficial use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Inciteful Med is updated weekly with peer-reviewed research that appears in such online sources as PubMed, a service of the National Institutes of Health.

"We provide patients and doctors with the latest literature in an easy-to-understand format, helping doctors and patients make informed choices," Erika says.

Like my patient advocacy practice, Inciteful Med grew out of a personal experience. Erika's partner, Mike Weishuhn, had a family member with a potentially serious health issue. Rather than taking the wait-and-see approach the doctor had advised, he used his skills

as a data engineer to find a paper published in the U.K. that gave them new information and a reason to seek a second opinion.

"It showed us two things," Erika says. "First, the importance of advocacy and, second, the difficulty of finding reliable, personalized information. That experience changed everything for their family and sparked our mission to make medical research accessible, so more patients and families can shape their care and change their lives."

And so Inciteful Med was born.

Anyone can use the website anonymously to research up to five questions a day. Creating an account lets you ask an unlimited number of questions.

Users can also upload their medical records to have them analyzed and receive personalized results from the latest research. For their users' peace of mind, the company will soon be HIPAA-compliant.

The website is free to use for now. Wishing it to remain independent, they don't want advertising dollars from pharmaceutical companies. It may one day become donor-supported like Wikipedia or offer subscriptions.

HEALTH, page 5

Country Journal TEAM



EDITOR
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

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



@Country Journal



countryjournal.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

Turley Publications, Inc.

www.turley.com

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

ISSN NO. 0747-2471

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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



PHONE

413.283.8393

Fax: 413.283.7017

Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL

Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor

Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com

Subscriptions
www.turley.com

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

WEB

www.countryjournal.turley.com

@Country Journal

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

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.

FLORENCE

Florence Bank donates \$28,500 to help 'Ice Out Hunger'

FLORENCE – For the third consecutive year, Florence partnered with UMass Sports Properties and the University of Massachusetts hockey team to Ice Out Hunger in the region at a time when food insecurity is at a record high.

To date, the promotion has provided \$28,500 of support to 19 area food pantries. The program started in October 2023, with the bank awarding \$500 grants to 19 nonprofits from Springfield to Greenfield at UMass home games. A different food pantry was highlighted during the first intermission and a fan was chosen to ride on the Mullins Center's Zamboni, which is wrapped with Florence Bank's branding.

Andrew Stuebner, general manager for UMass Sports Properties, the multi-media rights holder for Massachusetts Athletics, is

pleased to partner with the bank to help Ice Out Hunger. "This initiative continues to be a win-win because it supports vital nonprofits while bringing extra excitement to our fans at the games," Stuebner said. "We are thrilled to be completing our third year of this impactful partnership with Florence Bank."

Florence Bank President and CEO Matt Garrity said, "Our partnership with UMass has helped raise awareness and provide much-needed support for local organizations committed to food security in the Valley." The donated funds have helped cover the cost of thousands of meals for people in need throughout the Valley.

"We are deeply honored to be a part of the Ice Out Hunger program. This generous gift empowers us to continue our mission of

nourishing our neighbors and ensures that everyone in our community has access to the food they need," said Kaitlyn Ferrari, development director of Manna Community Kitchen.

The following organizations have received funds from the Bank as part of the Ice Out Hunger program: Amherst Survival Center; Center for Self-Reliance/Community Action Pioneer Valley, Greenfield; CHD Not Bread Alone, Amherst; Chesterfield Community Food Cupboard; Easthampton Community Center; Easthampton Congregational Church Food Cupboard; Gray House, Springfield; Hampshire Support Alliance, Northampton; Helping Hands Cupboard/Belchertown United Church of Christ, Belchertown; Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, Chicopee;

Manna Community Kitchen, Northampton; Margaret's Pantry and Kate's Kitchen at Providence Ministries, Holyoke; Most Holy Redeemer Church, Hadley; Neighbors Helping Neighbors, South Hadley; Northampton Survival Center; Open Pantry Community Services, Springfield; Southampton Community Cupboard; Springfield Rescue Mission and The Parish Cupboard, West Springfield/Agawam/Feeding Hills.

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield and Springfield.

CHESTER

Hilltown Hikers to host special trolley presentation

CHESTER – The Western Mass Hilltown Hikers will hold a special event on Sunday, March 22 at 1 p.m. in the Chester Railway Museum, 10 Prospect St.

Steve Cormier, local author of three Hilltown History books: "The Sacrificial Land," "Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins" and now, "Good Golly...Missed Trolley" will give a power point presentation on the trolley system. It will focus on the direct impact that trolley systems once had within Western Massachusetts. The "Hilltown Dilemma" will be discussed; a lack of trolley

service within this greater area, which contributed to population loss and economic despair. Unfortunately, the Huckleberry line would not provide the service that the Hilltown area desperately needed. Presentation will also cover the New Haven Railroad's numerous monopoly attempts to control overall transportation in the western part of the state.

Shirts and hiker swag will be for sale by donation at the event. Registration is not required. Suggested Donation is \$15 and will go for the conserved Chester Granite and Polishing Works property and are greatly appreciated.

OPINION

HEALTH

from page 4

Neither Erika nor Mike has a medical background, and they stress that patients should use the information on Inciteful Med in collaboration with their health-care providers.

"Mike's and my background is in education technology, providing tools for teachers trying to help students learn and feel confident. In many ways, Inciteful Med is similar to that work, but for patients and doctors," she says. "Inciteful Med inspires confidence. People want to be heard and sup-

ported and know their questions aren't dumb."

Inciteful Med can also be consulted by providers, who can't possibly be familiar with all of the latest research and clinical trials. Information can take years to move from the researchers' labs to your bedside.

"Our health-care system makes it hard for even dedicated doctors to keep up," Erika says. "Different priorities, red tape and slow adoption of new technology mean important medical advances take too long to

reach patients."

Here are some ways to make Inciteful Med work for you:

- Given a new diagnosis? Ask Inciteful Med about the symptoms associated with your diagnosis and if the symptoms could be associated with a different condition.

- Prescribed a new medication? Ask Inciteful Med if the drug has been shown to be an effective treatment for your condition.

- Concerned about the safety of a vaccine? Ask it to

show you the latest studies.

- Experiencing a side effect after a medical procedure or medication? Ask whether what you're experiencing is a known side effect and what the risks are.

- Interested in finding out if there are new treatments for your condition? Ask Inciteful Med to tell you about any recent advances or clinical trials.

In addition to answering your initial questions, the website returns a number of related questions you may want to ask, letting

you delve further into the research.

I often talk about making the most of the time you have with your doctor – coming prepared with written questions and specific concerns. Taking a few minutes to do research on IncitefulMed.com could give you a place to start the conversation with your providers.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.

NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

GARDEN

from page 4

sprinklers each season to water the lawn for you, take some time early in the season to position them so that water isn't wasted on sidewalks or driveways.

Mark the location and set up will be a no-brainer each time.

To grow best, grass requires an inch of moisture each week, more if your soil is sandy. Do the tea cup test to determine how much water your sprinklers emit and at what rate. Simply place a tea cup or other container on the lawn and turn on the sprinkler, check every five minutes or so until water reaches the inch mark.

Now you can set a timer, or turn off the sprinklers manually knowing your lawn has gotten its weekly drink. Most people know that early morning is the best time to water the lawn. By watering early in the day less moisture is lost to evaporation.

Grass is also less prone

to fungal diseases because it has a chance to dry before nightfall.

Know your soil. A friend of mine who knew a lot about turf once told me that if I were to apply one thing to my lawn each season it should be lime. Grass can't grow well, or fight off diseases or bugs for that matter, if it isn't getting the nutrients it needs.

Many nutrients are bound up until the pH is corrected. Get a soil test and specify on the order form that you wish to grow grass, as results for flower or vegetable gardening may differ.

Based on the results of your test, recommendations will be made as to the type of lime to use and at what application rate. For more information contact the UMass Extension or www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest. Here are some interesting grass facts: Did you know that according to a poll

(sponsored by Briggs and Stratton) 64% of homeowners wish they had a better lawn? Or that 63 million households own at least one lawn mower?

The Professional Lawn Care Association estimates that a well-maintained lawn can increase the value of a home by up to 20%.

This was probably of little concern to Presidents Washington and Jefferson... they were the first to have lawns as we know them today but they were maintained by sheep!

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.

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-fduamqHYeekw5w
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. Sadlowski, 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
pvaglife@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

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.



- Check Out Our For Sale, Services, Pets and Other Classifieds
- Real Estate: For Sale, For Rent & Vacation Rentals
- Help Wanted: Part Time & Full Time Career Opportunities

Call to place your classified ad:

413-283-8393

the best around
CLASSIFIEDS
TURLEY PUBLICATIONS, INC.
Reaching readers in
50 local communities every week.



PITTSFIELD

BEAT hosts presentation on wildlife and road ecology

PITTSFIELD – Berkshire Environmental Action Team presents an event on wildlife connectivity and road ecology, exploring how road infrastructure impacts wildlife habitat on Saturday, April 11 from 9:30 a.m.-noon at Berkshire Community College, 1350 West St.

The event will feature presentations from two nationally recognized experts in the field: Dr. Patricia Cramer, Founder and Director of the Wildlife Connectivity Institute and Ben Goldfarb,

award-winning environmental journalist and author. In addition to these presentations, the event includes a hands-on stream table demonstration showing how ecosystems and infrastructure interact. There will also be opportunities to learn from partner organizations about how to get involved locally. Registration is available by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/Making-Way-for-Wildlife>.

Dr. Cramer will share an overview of how communities across the U.S. are working to reconnect wild-

life habitat across roads. She will discuss emerging policies and programs and how protective plans can be implemented anywhere. In her role with the Wildlife Connectivity Institute, Cramer works with states to identify road segments where mitigation would most benefit wildlife and to design effective crossing structures.

She has conducted studies for 15 departments of transportation, including MassDOT and has monitored over 100 wildlife crossing structures. She has received

awards from the Federal Highway Administration, the Utah Department of Transportation, the Utah Wildlife Society and the Denver Zoo.

Ben Goldfarb will join the event virtually to teach how transportation infrastructure impacts animals and ecosystems and what people can do to create a safer world for all living beings.

Goldfarb's work appeared in National Geographic, The Atlantic, Smithsonian Magazine, The New Yorker and many

other publications, and has been anthologized in the Best American Science and Nature Writing. His most recent book, Crossings: How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of Our Planet, was named among New York Times' "Best Books of 2023" and received the Rachel Carson Award for Excellence in Environmental Writing and the Banff Book Competition's Grand Prize.

This event is presented in partnership with Berkshire Community College, with support from The Nature

Conservancy, Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic Heritage, Greenagers and The Conway School.

Berkshire Environmental Action Team works to protect the environment for wildlife in western Massachusetts through science, education and advocacy. BEAT partners with residents, municipalities and regional organizations to advance biodiversity protection, healthy ecosystems and community engagement in environmental stewardship across the Berkshires.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Great Barrington and Northampton receive grants

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll Administration announces awards totaling \$10 million through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Microtransit and Last-Mile Transit Grant Program.

The funding will support Regional Transit Authorities, municipalities and a Regional Planning Agency in expanding flexible, technology-enabled transit options that improve access to jobs, housing, education and essential services across Massachusetts.

The grants will support projects that use microtransit, on-demand shared-ride services, and last-mile connections that link riders to transit hubs and key destinations. Award recipients will use the funding to expand rural access, improve mobility for people who lack transit

options, and support communities advancing sustainable housing and transportation planning. Three awards will fund regional bikeshare initiatives that strengthen first and last mile connections.

Mayor Gina Louise Sciarra of Northampton said, "On behalf of the City of Northampton, I am thrilled to accept a Last Mile grant from MassDOT for ValleyBike for operations and fleet modernization for this critical piece of

the Pioneer Valley's transportation puzzle. As is the case with all modes of travel, this 24/7 last mile transit is only feasible with public investment through partnerships between local communities and the Commonwealth. This is an important next step toward a more equitable transportation system that prioritizes all modes and all users. This funding enables ValleyBike bike share

to continue to provide transportation for residents throughout the Valley to connect to regional bus transit and other destinations where transit does not currently exist. My entire team here in Northampton is deeply grateful to our state legislative delegation for funding this important work and for their tireless advocacy for transit alternatives. We are proud to partner with MassDOT to operate this critical program."

Local recipients included: Northampton received \$1,500,000 to support the regional ValleyBike electric bikeshare system, including operations, fleet expansion and dock replacement and Great Barrington received \$600,000 to continue their microtransit program serving Southern Berkshire County.



BLANDFORD

Democratic Town Committee holds caucus for state delegates

BLANDFORD – The Democratic Town Committee met Saturday, March 14 at Town Hall.

They held the caucus for delegates to the Massachusetts State Democratic Convention.

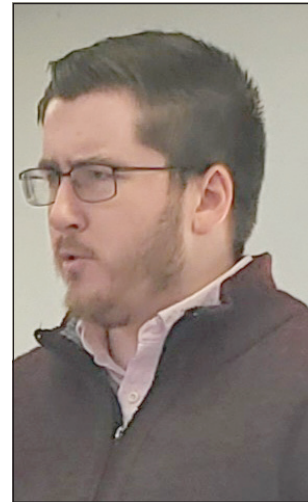
Chris Moylan was elected delegate and Pam Dirschka is the alternate and representing the chair, Lloyd Martin, will be Judith MacKinnon and Kate Goodrich will be the add-on delegate representing youth. Others will attend as guests.

Incumbent State Sen. Paul Mark spoke to the group as he is running for re-election this year, and Agawam City Councilor Tom Hendrickson, who is going up against State Rep. Nicholas Boldyga of Southwick also spoke to the group. Hendrickson was also at the Select Board meeting Monday, March 9.

The convention will be at the Digital Federal Credit Union Center in Worcester Friday, May 29 and 30.



State Sen.
Paul Mark



City Councilor of Agawam
Tom Hendrickson

MONTEREY

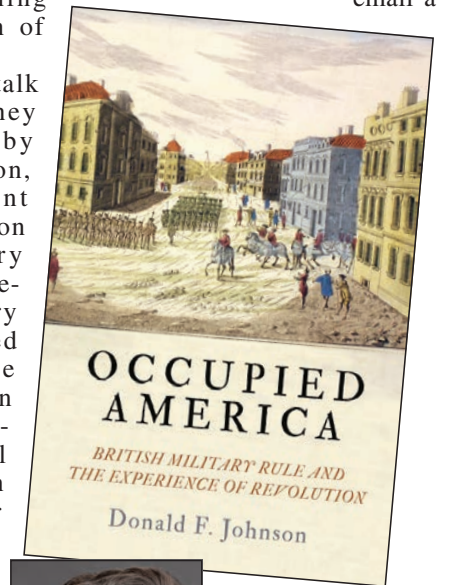
Bidwell House Museum presents zoom program

MONTEREY – On Thursday, March 26 at 7 p.m. the Bidwell House Museum presents the second of two off-season Zoom programs about the Revolutionary War era, a timely topic in 2026, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

For this last talk on March 26, they will be joined by Donald F. Johnson, who will present Military Occupation in Revolutionary America. The experience of military occupation shaped the course of the American Revolution for tens of thousands of colonial Americans living in port cities and other areas controlled by the British Army. This talk explores how those experiences transformed ordinary peoples' attitudes towards their government and the Revolution and ultimately contributed to the defeat of the British Empire in America.

Donald F. Johnson is a historian of popular politics during the era of the American Revolution and associate professor of history at North Dakota State University. In 2023 he published "Occupied America: British Military Rule and the Experience of Revolution" with the University of Pennsylvania Press.

The lecture will be held on Zoom. Registration via the Museum event page is required by visiting <https://www.bidwellhousemuseum.org/event/military-occupation-in-revolutionary-america/>. Details for how to access the event will be sent via email a



Donald F. Johnson

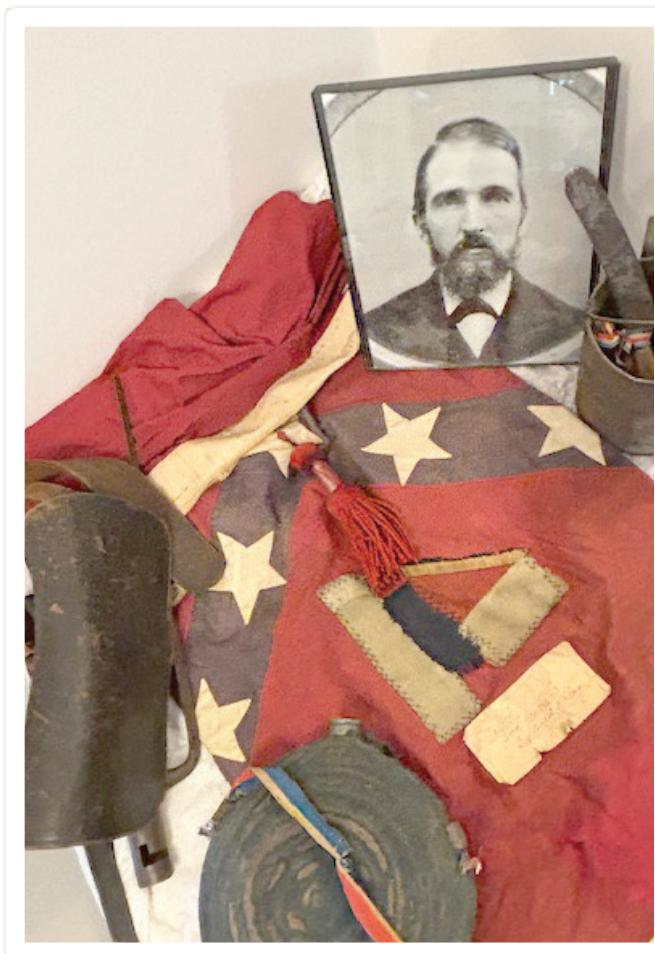
few days in advance.

The Bidwell House Museum grounds-194 acres of woods, fields, historic stone-walls, self-guided trails and picnic sites-are open every day, dawn

until dusk, free of charge. The program of events can be found on the museum's website by visiting www.bidwellhousemuseum.org.

Military Occupation in Revolutionary America with Donald F. Johnson. Members: Free. Non-members: \$15. Only one registration is required per household. Lecture will be held via Zoom, 7 p.m.

Blandford Historical Society... Did You Know?



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

Charles A. Taggart
(1843-1937)

Few wartime trophies have followed a path as unusual as the flag tied to Charles A. Taggart seized on a Virginia battlefield, preserved through his long life and eventually returned to Blandford by a childhood friend, who believed it belonged home.

Born in Blandford on Jan. 17, 1843, Charles A. Taggart came of age in a family shaped by hardship. His father died early and his mother was in fail-

A portrait of Charles Taggart and his military gear and memorabilia are on display at the Blandford Historical Society, which is open to visitors Thursday mornings.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

ing health. At 19, he enlisted in the Union Army, joining Company B of the 37th Massachusetts Infantry, one of the western Massachusetts regiments sent south as the Civil War intensified.

Wounded at Gettysburg and beyond

Taggart's service quickly placed him in some of the war's fiercest fighting. Two years before earning the nation's highest military honor, he was already facing heavy fire at the Battle of Gettysburg. The 37th Massachusetts arrived near Little Round Top during the battle, where Confederate artillery struck advancing Union troops. Local historical records note that Taggart was among eight men in his company wounded there. For nearly three years, Taggart fought with his regiment, enduring repeated wounds, as they pushed deeper into Confederate territory.

Heroism in the War's Final Week

Taggart's defining act

came only three days before the end of the war. During fierce fighting at the Battle of Sailor's Creek in Virginia, Taggart advanced under heavy fire, captured part of a Confederate battle flag and brought it back to his commanding officer. At the time, battle flags were prized military symbols, marking regiments in combat and representing unit honor. Capturing one often required charging directly into enemy lines. For that act of bravery, Taggart received the Medal of Honor, recognizing extraordinary courage during combat.

A piece of history finds its way home

After the war, area officials wanted the flag back. According to local accounts, a deal was struck. The tassel and a patch from the captured flag were cut away and sewn onto a newly made Confederate flag for his personal collection. That unusual keepsake remained one of Taggart's most treasured possessions for the rest of his life.

Taggart lived to the age of 94, outliving many of his fellow veterans. He had lost his wife early in marriage and spent his later years without close family nearby, eventually living in a veterans' home in Dayton, Ohio not far from his final resting place.

When he died, a long-time friend from Albany, New York learned that no one had claimed his belongings. That friend gathered Taggart's personal effects and returned them to his hometown.

Today, at the Blandford Historical Society, visitors can still see his preserved collection including his Medal of Honor, the unusual Confederate flag, his mess kit, bayonet and more – a reminder that a young hilltown soldier carried Blandford's name through some of the nation's most defining moments, and why Blandford is a small town with a big history.

BLANDFORD

St. Patrick's lunch showcases Irish tradition

BLANDFORD – Council on Aging Chair Joann Martin, aka Chef de Cuisine Martin, said “It was my pleasure and after doing this now for my fifth year, I think I finally know what I’m doing.”

And she has been a restaurateur for many more years, so of course she knows what she’s doing and she does it well. This year so many diners made reservations the party was moved to the gym, which was decorated with shades of green, shamrocks and Cross of Iron shamrock plants on tables.

Martin relayed the statistics for the over 50 diners dished up: 35 pounds of corned beef, 15 pounds of potatoes, 15 pounds of carrots, four loaves of soda bread and four bundt cakes, which were green with chocolate chips.



Blandford seniors had Irish green punch.

There were children as well as out of towners enjoying the corned beef and cabbage. “And three gallons of green punch to top it all off,” said Martin.

The glasses were



There was festive table décor. Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

rimmed with green sugar. And this year Select Board member Ted “T.J.” Cousineau forgot his Irish Bowler.



Council on Aging Board member Barbara Langmore with COA Director Margit Mikuski signed diners in at the door.



There was a crowd at the gym for the COA St. Patrick's Day dinner



Blood pressure kit.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Blood pressure kit available for use at Town Hall

BLANDFORD – Shared Nursing Services MaryAnn M Deming MSN, RN Regional Public Health Nurse for Western Hampden County Public Health District arranged for the American Heart Association’s blood pressure

kit and information about high blood pressure to be available.

The kit is available for use in the corridor at Town Hall. The instructions for use of the blood pressure kit are on the bulletin board just above the table, along with

myriad pamphlets about how to keep blood pressure in check. Food, salt, exercise and healthy habits are all included. The Porter Memorial Library also has a blood pressure kit available to be checked out for home use.

First Congregational Church holds lasagna dinner March 28

BLANDFORD – A reminder from the First Congregational Church of Blandford about the fundraiser lasagna dinner set for Saturday, March 28 at 6

p.m. at the Town Hall.

Reservations are required and tickets should be purchased ahead of time; there are no walk-ins.

Tickets are \$20 per per-

son and can be purchased from Ann Savery-Emo at 413-464-1685, Stephen Hart at 413-896-2543 or Sean O’Clair at 413-386-6696.

COURY

from page 1

area will be reserved for passive outdoor reaction including wildlife observation, hunting, fishing and trapping, according to the DFG.

Town Accountant Kelli Pontbriand joined the meeting for the review of capital expenditures.

Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay told the board he expects to have a response the end of this month for a grant for a roller. A road grader purchase was discussed because of the expense to keep the existing machine operational.

Responding to Coury’s question about renting, Hultay said that the grader is used year-round and Hultay cited it being used recently to clear snow drifts. He called it the “Swiss Army Knife of the Highway Department.”

He is also looking for a “Grizzly Strainer” which will let the department do more of its own roadwork.

To store any new equipment, Hultay has two 40-foot containers which can house any new equipment and cover the containers with a canopy. These come through Ch. 90 funds. Hultay was firm about doing things to “make our equipment last longer.”

There are many new possibilities for using Chapter 90 funds and Hultay said that he wants to get the best possible use out of the funds that he can. He again told the board of the need to refurbish the gas and oil tanks at the Highway Garage. Coury suggested setting

aside funds for the grader and the building. Hultay said he would try to keep the grader going as long as possible. All stabilization accounts are funded with \$25,000 annually according to Letendre. He provided three quotes for the tanks at the garage.

The board had to break off Hultay as Jim Long joined the meeting virtually to discuss the acquisition of land abutting the Eversource substation coming out of Chapter 61A, giving the town the first right of refusal. There is a short time left to have appropriate appraisals done and an agreement with the landowner. The town has contracted with Sansoucy Associates “for immediate appraisal of 18 acres... for removal from Mass. Ch. 61A – Assessment and Taxation of Agricultural and Horticultural land.” The funds to purchase this property will come from the \$200,000 the town authorized for use by the Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee.

The board then discussed the Post Office rental of space in the old town hall. The lease is up in November 2027. Letendre said “We pretty much spend what we take in” for heat, electricity and water. Coury agreed with Cousineau to keep the Post Office, but charge more.

The board considers the building “not to be a functional building right now” and the suggestion to tear it down cost appeared greater than “putting a new roof on.”

The board will investigate if the Post Office be

interested in moving to the Town Hall. There will be more discussion.

Hultay further approached the board putting the purchase of a roadside boom mower over the purchase of a grader right now.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera updated the board of several items. Audio visual upgrades look to be very expensive for the gym for meetings. For dark shades an estimate came in for \$11,000. A state contractor looked at roof repairs for town hall and if repairs are done there are ten years of life left. The chimney at the old town hall was also considered.

Chapter 90 funds for this year are \$468,171 while last year the amount was \$257,382.

Franklin Regional Council of Governments is not able to assist with bidding process for the Russell Stage Road project, Ferrera said they said they were “overbooked.” The town does pay \$1,500 for their bidding services.

The Battery Energy Storage System bylaws and Solar bylaws have been updated, according to Coury. The next thing to happen is for the Planning Board to accept the changes and conduct a public hearing and then a Special Town Meeting to consider the changes will be set.

Coury said she would like to have an executive session with Harald Scheid from the Regional Resource Group who handle the town’s assessing to discuss tax benefits to the town for solar.

TOWN ACCOUNTANT PARTICIPATES IN MULTIPLE MEETINGS



Blandford Town Accountant Kelli Pontbriand was in town Monday, March 9 and participated in multiple meetings on financial matters. She works remotely from Florida.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm



Send Us Your Photos!

countryjournal@turley.com

WESTHAMPTON

Westhampton Public Library announces upcoming news and events

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Road, will be closed on Monday, April 20 Patriot's Day.

Library hours are Monday and Thursday from 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. To place a request for curbside pickup, people may email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring programs include: computer help with Bob Miller on second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m., yoga Mondays at 6 p.m., Scrabble group Tuesday at 2 p.m., book group fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. (bring a poem to share), walk-in wellness clinics with Westhampton's public health nurse first and third

Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m. and coffee and chat Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

Tech Connect drop-in tech help takes place on Thursday, April 23 from 2-4 p.m.

CFCE playgroup for pre-schoolers meets on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. and story time with Emily meets on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

Teen craft nights takes place on Thursday, April 16 at 6 p.m. The group meets on the third Thursdays. This month's craft will be an amigurumi mushroom. Amigurumi is the Japanese art of knitting or crocheting small, stuffed yarn plushies. Teens should email Emily at ewayne@cwmar.org to sign up.

On Thursday, April 9 at 6 p.m. local author and hospice nurse, Maureen Groden, R.N. will discuss her new book "When a Loved One

is Dying: Conversations About Care, Connection and Coping." When faced with a loved one's serious illness, many families find themselves overwhelmed, uncertain and afraid. In this compassionate guide, hospice nurse and educator Maureen Groden, RN, offers a sympathetic and deeply human glimpse into one of life's most challenging passages. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the event. People may stop by the library and receive a 30% coupon code for the book if they wish to purchase it ahead of time. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Public Library and the Lyn Keating Programming Fund for sponsoring this event.

On Monday, April 13 at 1:30 p.m. Michael and Carrie Kline's will provide a concert of Appalachian traditional

songs. Their lives are inspired by Appalachian music and culture and their performances travel from ancient caves to kitchen music. Their voices carry the songs with truth and authenticity along with their guitar accompaniments and haunting harmonies. As folklorist-musicians the Klins weave songs and stories, evoking the times that really matter, time with family and friends, spiritual times, wrapped in a patchwork quilt of vivid imagery.

The band also features two Valley greats: Joe Blumenthal, known widely for his upright bass accompaniment in Klezmer, Arabic, Balkan, Bluegrass and Old-Time settings and Jim Armenti, a beloved name in Western Massachusetts known as a band member for the Young At Heart Chorus and the Lonesome

Brothers. Here he performs his dynamic mandolin work. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Public Library and the Lyn Keating Programming Fund for sponsoring this event.

On Saturday, April 18 at 11a.m. Katie LaFond and Judee Wayne, both of Westhampton, will perform a flute concert. Light refreshments will be served. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Public Library and the Lyn Keating Programming Fund for sponsoring this event.

On Thursday, April 23 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. the library will hold an art reception for Ellen Koteen. Her

photos capture the beauty of a flower, animal or landscape in photographs. She considers the opportunity to show my work is a gift.

On Saturday, April 25

from 10:30 a.m.-noon. Lara Tupper will hold a writing workshop entitled "Mary Oliver as Muse." Beloved Massachusetts poet Mary Oliver (1935 – 2019) wrote of self-compassion and the natural world. In this writing workshop, Lara Tupper will help people explore these themes in Oliver's poems and in brief writing exercises. No writing experience or prior knowledge of Oliver is necessary, just a willingness to be curious on the page. All adults are welcome to attend. They should bring a notebook, a pen and any writing tools that serve them. Registration is required. People may visit Lara to register <https://www.laratupper.com/contact>. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Public Library and the Lyn Keating Programming Fund for sponsoring this event.

Committee approves Gateway '26-'27 calendar

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The Gateway Regional School Committee approved the 2026-2027 school calendar at their Wednesday, March 11 meeting.

Teachers return on Tuesday, Aug. 25, Wednesday, Aug. 26 and Wednesday, Aug. 27. There will be no school for teachers on Friday, Aug. 28. Students in grades 1-12 will return on Monday, Aug. 31.

Pre-K and Kindergarten orientation will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 2, with school starting for those students on Wednesday, Sept. 8. Labor Day weekend will be extended to four days with schools closed on Friday, Sept. 4 and Monday, Sept. 7.

Elementary school open houses will take place on Thursday, Oct. 1. Gateway Regional's Open House will be Thursday, Oct. 8. Parent teacher conferences will be on Wednesday, Nov. 18 and Thursday, Nov. 19; those days will be half-days for students.

The holiday break will begin with a half-day on Wednesday, Dec. 23. Students and staff will return on Monday, Jan. 4. Winter break will run from Monday, Feb. 15 – Friday, Feb. 19; spring break will run Monday, April 19 – Friday, April 23. If the district has more than 10 snow days, spring break will be shortened starting with Friday, April 23 and working backwards.

Gateway Regional School's graduation will be Friday, June 4.

If there are no snow days, the last day for PreK and Kindergarten will be Friday, June 11. If we have no snow days, the final day for grades 1 to 11 will be Tuesday, June 15. The last three days of school will be half days for Gateway Regional School; elementary schools will have half-days on the last two days of the year.

The district calendar also outlines holidays and professional development days and will be posted to the Gateway website www.grsd.org.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

University of Massachusetts announce Dean's List

DEAN'S LIST University of Massachusetts

Amherst

Nicole Mary Hannigan of Chester
Liliana Manley of Chesterfield
Greta Muellner of Chesterfield
Leo Rivera of Chesterfield
Ori Douglas Sussman of Chesterfield
West William Joseph Williams of Cummington
Sophia Raven Baker of Easthampton
Kailyn Marie Cabrini of Easthampton
Sagen Foster Crowell of Easthampton
Maxwell Josef Dopp of Easthampton
Rosemary Dierdre Follet of Easthampton
Oisin Goldstein-Dea of Easthampton
Benjamin Guertin of Easthampton
Aliyah Jae Hall of Easthampton
Hailey Higgins-Figueroa of Easthampton
Cadence Alana Hiller of Easthampton
Elijah Howe of Easthampton
Michaela Elyse Kelley of Easthampton
Devin M Lemay of Easthampton
Skyler Andrew Lloyd of Easthampton
Alexander John Major of Easthampton
Evan M Omalley of Easthampton
Sonam Ottaviani of Easthampton
Aymane Oulbeid of Easthampton

Cameron Mark Powers of Easthampton
Emmett Quinn of Easthampton
Chloe Reeve-Patel of Easthampton
Jackson Charles Scott of Easthampton
Paul Eugene Seifert of Easthampton
Jenna Mary Wooster of Easthampton
Gabriel August Zellen of Easthampton
Jacob Penn of Huntington
Rowan Lily Boyer of Otis
Catherine Consolati of Otis
Mya M Martin of Otis
Olivia MacIver of Russell
Benjamin Jacob Gustafson Pritchard of Russell
Kota Rinaldi of Sandisfield
Aoife Charlotte McMurrich Reynolds of Westhampton
Kamryn Violet French of Williamsburg
Kira Jade French of Williamsburg
Mikayla Marie Tanner Joyner of Williamsburg
Isabella Kosiba of Williamsburg
Charles Thomas Por of Williamsburg
Shane Michael Prusak of Williamsburg
Anna Marie Shadrack of Williamsburg
Charles Gustav Strate of Williamsburg
William Henry Towler of Williamsburg
Matthew Scott Wilhelm of Williamsburg
Jonah T Graves of Worthington

Parents & Coaches
email us at: countryjournal@turley.com

SEND US
YOUR NEWS
& PHOTOS

BUDGET

from page 1

Matarazzo outlined a series of proposed cuts they had used to bring the towns assessments to the 2.44% increase, dropping the towns' collective share of the budget by over \$1.56 million. These included eliminating 2 administrators, 3.2 teachers, 3 instructional assistants and a.8 FTE secretary. Under this budget, the district's Director of Technology and Assistant Pupil Services Director would be cut.

Also on the chopping block were the wood shop teacher, music and wellness at Chester Elementary, a GRS School Adjustment Counselor and a World Language and Culture teacher at Littleville Elementary. Still more staff faced reductions in their hours/pay, including 2 secretaries and a high school Spanish teacher. Funding for 7-1/2 other positions would now be allocated through grants or incoming school choice tuition, which comes with risk if those grants are reduced or eliminated.

In an email to the committee ahead of the budget adoption meeting, Matarazzo announced that "It is important to note that if our assumptions are incorrect, town meetings do not pass the budget, or other unexpected changes occur in state or federal funding, additional reductions may be necessary. We believe that barring the unexpected, these

are the reductions that will ensure that we balance our students' learning needs with the resources available to us at this time."

Preschool and special education teacher Susan Rhoads read a letter that supported retaining Tamburrino's position. "In a district with declining enrollment, the consistent areas of growth have been in special education, ELL [English Language Learners], and early childhood numbers, all of which fall under the purview of the Director of Pupil Services." Rhoads explained that the district has had a difficult time finding licensed special education teachers and almost half of those are on waivers and need to work under an administrator's license-a role currently filled by Tamburrino. "These same staff need assistance with writing IEPs, doing evaluations, writing progress notes, etc.," Rhoads said. Special education law has recently changed to require that IEP's be given back to parents within five school days (not ten) of their meeting and Tamburrino also has a hand in making that happen. In addition, he handles all of the transitions for young adults as they age out of public school services at age 22, serves as the Board Certified Behavior Analyst for middle/high school students and oversees the life skills program.

"Given that the Pupil Services office is already stretched thin, I can't imagine how these things will all happen with a reduction in staff," Rhoads concluded, adding that she wanted to know how this decision was made.

It is not common for districts our size to have a full time AD of Pupil Services," Matarazzo said.

School committee member Jeana Briggs countered, saying she had been inundated with emails from staff and former staff for Tamburrino. "I think this is a bad move," Briggs said. "We already have positions that we cannot fill with qualified people."

Data on the Massachusetts Department of Education website reports that 21.18% of Massachusetts students qualify for special education services. Gateway's percentage is 25.8%.

Committee members were also concerned about other cuts. "I think that we are disproportionately cutting the arts," said Huntington's Brianna Sloane. Chairman Jason Fogue pointed out that the district had reduced arts within its own graduation requirements. Sloane responded that many artists get their own funding and might be able to put a school program together without impacting the budget.

Gateway senior and student representative to the

School Committee Theo Deangelis-Page weighed in after the meeting. "As I learned about the teacher cuts, I became increasingly worried about the opportunity for students," he said. "When I was a sophomore, I was able to fit wood shop into my schedule. Without a doubt it was my favorite class. The shelf I made as an introduction project still sits on my desk. But I understood that our administration has found every possible way to decrease the effect on everyday student life. I do hope that the re-allocation of roof funds will help ease these cuts, but it's still worrying."

Montgomery committee member Peter DeGregorio asked if there were any "one-off" drivers of this higher budget. Business Manager Amy Mason said that there had been substantial increases to health insurance over the past year, which should not be as dramatic next year. Matarazzo later confirmed that the 2025 budget had passed with an 18% increase in health insurance. Last August, they saw another 20% increase and rates for Fiscal Year 2027 are up an additional 12.48%, with staff also paying higher premiums, copays and deductibles. This is to make up for a shortfall at the Hampshire County Insurance Trust caused by rising premiums, prescription drug costs and higher incidents of medical

care. The Trust has been taking significant steps to build back its depleted reserves and return to long-term stability.

"The state is absolutely not supporting small districts like ours," offered Matarazzo. "It is a risky time to be in public education." Jason Fogue agreed, but asked if it was time to reduce the amount of money going into the capital stabilization account. This account, he explained, was set up after the final year of paying off the building program that had renovated the Gateway complex and built Chester and Littleville Elementary Schools. Since then, the towns have continued to fund those payments into a capital stabilization account, which is earmarked for a new roof needed for the Gateway complex.

"I think we are mortgaging our kids so that we don't have to mortgage the roof," Fogue admonished. He suggested lowering the \$794,000 currently going into that account. "Have the towns keep paying it, but not for that purpose. Maybe take a better look at what directly impacts students." Fogue also advocated adding back arts requirements for graduation.

Fogue said he expected the roof will come in at \$4 to \$5 million when it gets done. "If we get news of extra revenue, we might put it into

restoring the capital stabilization account," he said.

Both Fogue and Matarazzo had recently attended a meeting of the Pioneer Valley Superintendent's Roundtable and said that all of the districts in the region were reporting a difficult budget year.

Following a lengthy budget discussion, the school committee agreed to hold a special meeting on Monday, March 16 with a sole agenda item to vote to approve the FY 27 budget. "They have to have an approved budget to the towns no later than March 18," Fogue said.

After the meeting, Matarazzo said they are revising the budget to restore some of the reductions using funds that would have been reserved for Capital Stabilization. "We may bring a few 'levels' of restoration to test how much funding the Committee would like to take from that potential reserve. Restoration could include supplies and materials and/or positions."

"I believe the Committee intends to pass a budget that assumes we restore some cuts and then we advocate to our towns to pass the budget with the understanding that we'll be using a portion of their assessment that would have gone to Stabilization to put into the General fund," the superintendent said.

REGION

Freedom Credit Union supports Shriners

REGION – Freedom Credit Union is inviting members and the community to support Shriners Children’s New England in Springfield through its Month of Giving campaign in March.

Donations will be accepted at all Freedom Credit Union branches throughout western Massachusetts.

“Supporting children and families in our region is central to our mission,” said Glenn Welch, president of Freedom Credit Union. “Shriners Children’s New England provides extraordinary care and compassion and we are proud to rally our members and neighbors to support their work.”

Each month, Freedom Credit Union selects a local nonprofit to benefit from its Month of Giving campaign,

which helps strengthen the communities it serves. Funds collected during March will support Shriners Children’s New England as it continues providing highly specialized pediatric orthopedic, urology, rheumatology and cleft lip and palate care using advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies. All care is provided regardless of a family’s ability to pay.

Located in Springfield, Shriners is designed exclusively for children and offers a full range of services in one location for added convenience and comfort. Freedom Credit Union encourages community members to visit any of its branch during March to make a donation and help support life-changing care for local children and families.

WASHINGTON

Coles Brook Preserve group hike set to take place on March 21

WASHINGTON – The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers will host a group hike to Coles Brook Preserve on Saturday, March 21 at 11 a.m.

The 1.5 mile loop hike is rated easy to moderate on flat ground with minimal incline, declines, rock steps and bridges.

Parking is at the small lot on Cross Place Road with overflow along one side of Cross Place Road.

Directions: The hike will be along the Headwaters Trail, the newest hiking destination in the Hilltowns. The preserve protects a variety of habitats in a relatively intact forested landscape including forest, ponds, portions of Coles Brook and shrub wetlands. It abuts additional protected areas including the 3,400-acre

Middlefield State Forest.

The 1.2-mile Headwaters Trail, named for the narrow stream that emerges from the spring-fed Benson Pond, features gentle slopes, a natural stone staircase and charming bridges over Coles Brook. The trail offers access to this haven for wildlife, including porcupines, beavers, moose, birds, salamanders and more.

Coles Brook is a part of the Westfield River watershed of the Connecticut River and provides unique conservation opportunities based on the combination of intact forests and high-quality rivers and streams. This area offers one of the last and best opportunities for large-scale forest and aquatic system conservation in southern New England.

The Nature Conservancy’s goal is to con-

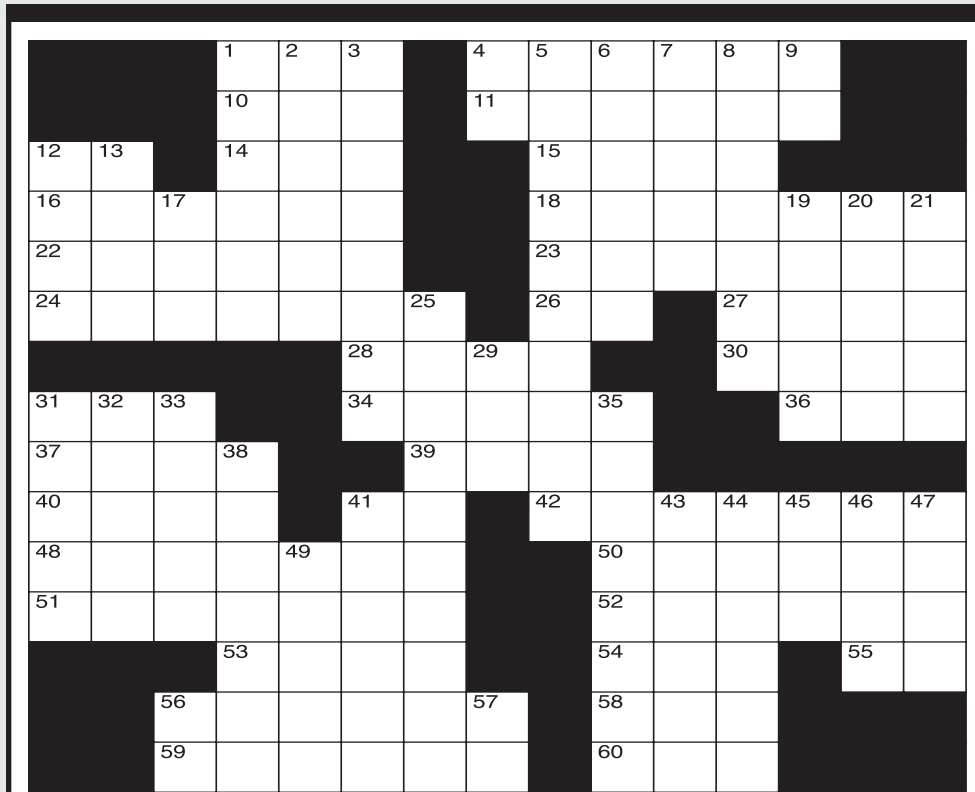
serve the integrity of these forests and rivers both to protect the Connecticut River watershed as well as provide connectivity to other forested habitats in the Appalachians. Tom Hoffman, Hilltown Hikers Hike Leader and Washington Historical chairman will point out the historical cellar holes along the way and the colonial influences in this area.

The will hike rain or shine. Registration is required. People may visit www.hilltownhikers.com to register per car under the events tab.

Maps and bottled water are provided. Well behaved dogs are welcome. Event is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$15. More details are available by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. People may email westermasshilltownhikers@aol.com or call/text 413-302-0312 if they have any questions. As always participants should be prepared for rocks, mud and roots and bring trekking poles and a snack.

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

People may follow on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Tees, hats and hiker swag will be for sale by donation at the event. People may see all the events, maps, blog and photos by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Inclined to do
- 4. Sketches
- 10. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- 11. Atomic #58
- 12. Dorm official
- 14. Small Eurasian deer
- 15. Southern constellation
- 16. Workers’ groups
- 18. Former
- 22. Excellent
- 23. Romance language related to Spanish
- 24. Reference
- 26. Equally
- 27. Dirty towels
- 28. A cargo (abbr.)
- 30. Ammunition
- 31. You get one in summer

CLUES DOWN

- 34. Slang for trucks with trailers
- 36. Swiss river
- 37. Exchange rate
- 39. British School
- 40. College teacher
- 41. Foreign Service
- 42. Horse gear
- 48. Cost to fly
- 50. A salt or ester of boric acid
- 51. Mocking
- 52. One who bird-watches
- 53. Concluding passage
- 54. A major division of geological time
- 55. Sodium
- 56. A way to produce
- 58. Soak
- 59. Laughed loudly and harshly
- 60. Affirmative

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Moth species phalonia ___
- 2. Quantum of energy
- 3. Break the law
- 4. Location of White House
- 5. Official cancellation of a decision
- 6. Where rockers work
- 7. Cut of beef: ___ mignon
- 8. Nocturnal burrowing reptile
- 9. Atomic #62
- 12. Genus of evergreen subshrubs
- 13. Flowering plant of the legume family
- 17. Inches per minute (abbr.)

- 19. Tropical fruit
- 20. Hot fluid beneath the earth’s crust
- 21. James __, painter
- 25. Popular dessert
- 29. Payment (abbr.)
- 31. Cuisine style
- 32. Genus of true flies
- 33. City in western France
- 35. Arrogance
- 38. One holding a position of command
- 41. Weekday
- 43. An evening party
- 44. Print errors
- 45. Not good
- 46. Egyptian Sun god
- 47. East German town
- 49. Olfactory property
- 56. Atomic #37
- 57. “Pollock” actor Harris

THIS WEEK’S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
Sometime this week you may discover a hidden talent you didn’t know you have, Aries. Embrace this new aspect of your identity and put it to good use.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22
Your emotional intelligence is your greatest asset. You help a friend navigate a tricky situation with ease midweek, and by the weekend you’re still going strong.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
Romance is a priority right now, Libra. Whether you are single or in a relationship, expect a moment this week when the spark is ignited once more.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
Leadership comes naturally to you now, Capricorn. People will be looking to you for guidance this week. Try to deliver it with kindness and no sense of ego.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
This is a time when you might feel grounded and secure, Taurus. Your inner strength will allow you to take a calculated risk that will pay off, either with your finances or relationships.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23
Right now your confidence is unshakable. Use all of your energy to advocate for something you fully believe in. Chances are you will evoke some change as a result.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
A small change in your routine may lead to a big increase in energy, Scorpio. Try rearranging your schedule to see what works best for you, and then make it a habit.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
Your “Eureka!” moment might come sooner than you would imagine, Aquarius. Pay attention to the details this week and tune your way of thinking toward innovation.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
You might find that this week a mental fog will lift, leaving you with a crystal-clear vision for the future, Gemini. Start moving toward your goals as soon as possible.

VIRGO

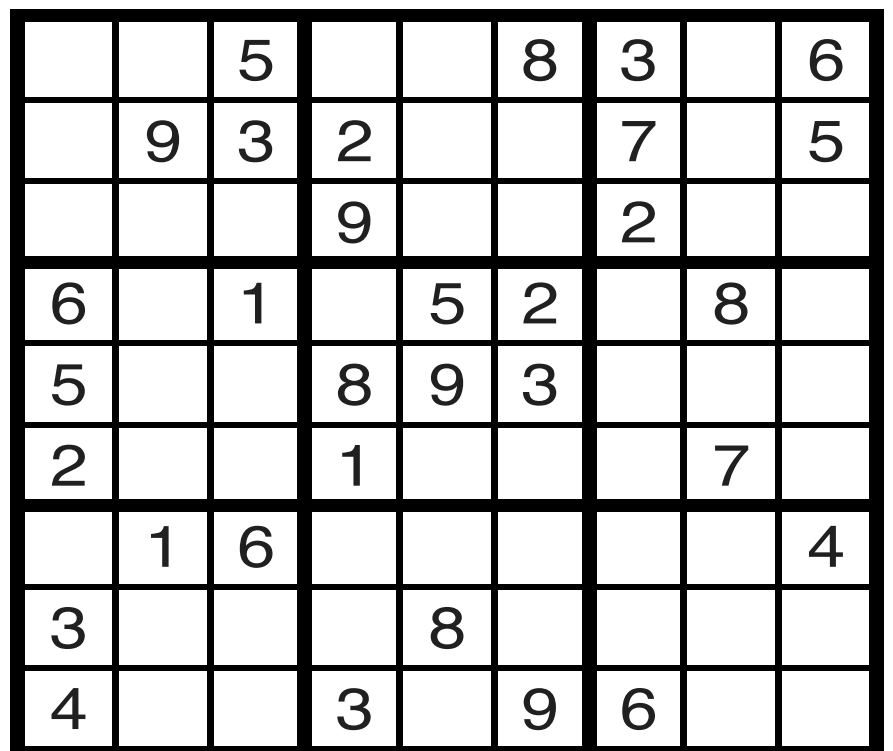
Aug 24/Sept 22
Order brings you joy, which means you may want to tackle transforming your work space into a more detailed operation. This will boost your mood and your performance.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, a dream you had is more attainable than you might think. Take the first step and quickly the path will open up for you. Enlist friends to push you even further along.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
Nature walks or creative hobbies may nourish your soul this week. You might find yourself deeply attuned to the world around you and the beauty you discover.



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

WESTFIELD AUTO PARTS INC

CARQUEST

AUTO PARTS & SUPPLIES

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED MERCHANDISE FOR ALL MAKES & MODELS

WHOLESALE RETAIL

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

Call “DALE” 8-12 BIRGE AVE., WESTFIELD

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

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

Classifieds

12 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS | SERVING 50 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

COMMUNITY MARKETPLACE

Call us at 413.283.8393

FOR SALE

FIREWOOD

FIREWOOD
Fresh cut & split \$225.00
Seasoned cut & split \$325.00
All hardwood.
Tree length available
*Also have seasoned softwood for outdoor boilers (Cheap).
Quality & volumes **guaranteed!!**
New England Forest Products
(413)477-0083

MORE HEAT LESS WOOD. Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX Outdoor Wood Furnace. EPA Certified. Titanium Stainless Steel. \$2K Tax Credit. Call (508)882-0178

MISCELLANEOUS

BUSINESS FOR SALE
BIOLINKS OF NEW ENGLAND.
Grease trap pumping business. Ninety customers, two pump trucks.
Call Les 413-297-1513.

MILLING, TURNING, GRINDING, TOOLS. Tools inspection, tools granite surface plates, red head spindles and more. **CERA BIDE GRINDING, 34 Front Street, Indian Orchard, 413-543-1227.**

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

WANTED

WANTED TO BUY

ALL ANTIQUES AND OLD STUFF WANTED.

BUYING Bottles, Crocks, Jugs, Pottery, Costume Jewelry, Toys, Games, coins, sterling, Glassware, Silver-plated items, watches, Musical instruments, typewriters, sewing machines, tools, radios, clocks, lanterns, lamps, kitchenware, cookware, knives, military, automotive, fire department, masonic, license plates, beer cans, barware, books, oil cans, advertising tins, hunting, fishing, signs, and more.

Donald Roy (860) 874-8396

ALWAYS BUYING ALL ANTIQUES:

Musical instruments, guitars, horns, keyboards, vintage electronics, jewelry, coins, watches, military cameras, sports memorabilia, art, sterling, signs, automotive, hunting, advertising, radios, ham radio equipment, audio equipment, toys, one item or entire estate.

Call Paul 413-206-8688

JUNK REMOVAL

ARA JUNK FURNITURE REMOVAL

Full house cleanouts, attics, basements, garages, pools, hot tubs, sheds, decks. Same day service. 8am-9pm. Credit cards accepted. Free estimates on phone.
Fully insured.
Call Pete 413-433-0356.

Advertise your home improvement services in our classifieds.
WE GET RESULTS!

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Handyman Services

Walker Home Improvement

Licensed & Insured

Finish Carpentry • Framing • Drywall • Painting • & more!

(413) 687-5552

SERVICES

A B Hauling and Removal Service

2*****A & B HOUSEHOLD REMOVAL SERVICE*****

Cellars, attics, garages cleaned, yard debris. Barns & sheds demolished. Swimming pools removed. Cheaper than dumpster fees and we do all the work. Lowest rates. Fully insured. (413)283-6512, cell (413)222-8868.

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

ELECTRICIAN

LICENSED ELECTRICIAN

I offer good quality electrical work, no project too small. Service upgrades, pools, trustworthy, dependable & insured. Master Elec. #20773A. Text/call Luis 413-218-3301.

HOME IMPROVEMENT

HANDYMAN SERVICES. 30 years experience, replacement windows, painting, patching, laminate flooring, carpet installation/repair, and storage solutions. Call/text 413-777-3376.

CHAMELEON PAINTING & REMODELING

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR Remodeling & Deck Specialists

Residential/Commercial
Fully Insured • Free Estimates
413-351-1147

LANDSCAPING

A+ ROZELL'S LANDSCAPING & BOBCAT SERVICE

Excavator Services
Overgrown property?
Extreme Brush Cutting!
Shrub, Stump, Tree Removal
Lawn/Arborvitae Installed
Loam, Stone, Mulch, Sand
Storm Clean-up
Small Demolition/ Junk Removal
Insured
Josh Rozell 413-636-5957

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

FRIDAY AT NOON

SERVICES

MATT GUERTIN LANDSCAPING

Landscape Design and Installation
Paver Patios, Walkways
For more services visit mattguertinlandscaping.com
Call or text 413-266-9975
Insured - Commercial - Residential

MASONRY

STOP WET BASEMENTS

ABC MASONRY & BASEMENT WATERPROOFING

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

PAINTING

PRO PAINTING

Low, low prices. All phases interior, exterior painting and wallpapering. Also minor carpentry.
413-310-5099.

PLUMBING

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

RUBBISH REMOVAL

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

TREE WORK

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

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

STUMP GRINDING

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

PETS

GERMAN SHEPHERD PUPS. Champion Czech and Belgian bloodlines. 30 years experience. 3M, 2F. Ready, w/shots. Now \$1,200. 413-218-2321

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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

LAND WANTED

SEEKING 8-20 PEACEFUL ACRES in Central MA for pet memorial sanctuary. Especially interested in lease-option, phased sale, or seller financing. Respectful, serious inquiry. Patrick | 508-735-3232 | founder@rainbow-meadow.org

FOR RENT

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised 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.

2026 TAX TIME

CHANTEL BLEAU ACCOUNTING SERVICES

For Full Accounting & Tax Service
Registered Tax Return Preparer

228 West St., Ware, MA 01082
413-967-8364

The IRS does not endorse any particular individual tax return preparer. For more information on tax preparers go to irs.gov.

Personal & Small Business Federal & All States

FAST TAX USA TAX PREPARATION SERVICE
413-348-2279

IRS Certified Tax Preparers
Independently owned and operated. Over 25 years experience.
1622 B North Main Street, Palmer, MA 01069
www.FastTax-MA.com
Free E-File & Direct Deposit

AJE FINANCIAL SERVICES

588 Center Street
Ludlow, MA 01056
www.ajefinancial.com
(413)589-1671

Personal, Business, Corporate and Partnership Tax Filing
Bookkeeping and Accounting Services
Trusted Experts Since 1995

TAX-TIME SURVIVAL GUIDE

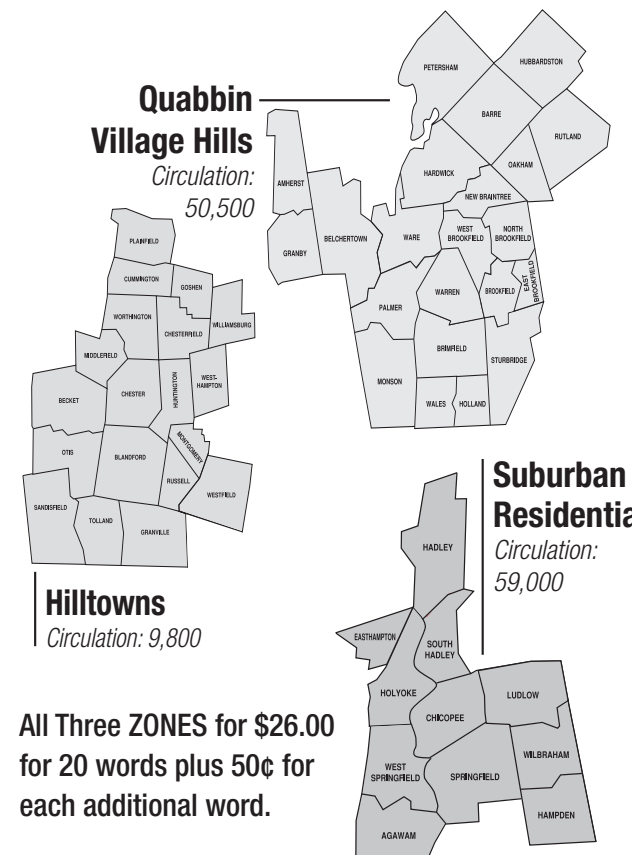
Call your local Turley Publications sales representative for information and rates on advertising your tax service here!
413-283-8393

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

FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

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

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



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

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

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

Make checks payable to Turley Publications

OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!

OBITUARY

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 Gelnhausen, 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 Village, a Westfield retirement community where they lived until the respective end of their days. During the Armbrook years, as always, Harriet developed a cadre of friends and admirers. Armbrook made her an ambassador to welcome new residents, drawing on the quintessential joy and caring heart that made her a natural hostess for everyone.

Shortness of breath in early January caused Harriet to be admitted to Noble Hospital on Jan. 9, 2026. Her condition declined as the day faded. As midnight approached, Harriet heard blessings and love expressed by three generations of her family, either at her side or by phone. Then she closed her eyes and was gone.

Harriet is survived by her two sons, James Gilman (Betsy), Albuquerque, New Mexico and Lee Gilman (Rebecca), Charlotte, North Carolina. She is also survived by grandchildren Chad Gilman (Laurie),

Denver, Colorado; Connor Gilman, Prescott, Arizona; Adam Gilman (Luisiana), Parker, Colorado; Annie Gilman Luis (Matthew), San Antonio, TX; Seth Gilman (Megan), Albuquerque, NM; Michelle Giammarco Cohen (Jason), Oak Park, Illinois; Jackson Gilman (Lauren), Lakeland, Tennessee. Her great-grandchildren are Grant Gilman, Denver, Colorado; William and Henry Gilman, Parker, Colorado; James and Kinsley Luis, San Antonio, Texas; Elliot and Oliver Gilman, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Jonah Cohen, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Ben Cohen, Boston; Emmett, King and Talia Gilman, Lakeland, Tennessee.

In addition to family, Pastor Miriam Howland, Harriet's dearest friend, was with her throughout her final hours. Harriet asked family to remember how Miriam was very much like a sister, checking on her daily for over 30 years, helping her with local needs and keeping her sons informed between their visits.

The Gilman family is being served by Firtion Adam Funeral Home, Westfield. Interment will be private. A Celebration of Life will be held on June 13, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at First Congregational Church of Chester, 334 Skyline Trail, Chester, MA 01011. A reception will follow the service. Memorials can be made to the church.

DEATH NOTICE

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.

STOCKBRIDGE

Berkshire Art Center hosts giant parade puppets during April vacation

STOCKBRIDGE – Berkshire Art Center will offer a lively and imaginative April Vacation program, Giant Parade Puppets, for students ages 8 and up, April 20-24 from 9:30a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Citizens' Hall, 130 Willard Hill Road, in Stockbridge.

The workshop will be led by artist and educator Eric "Homeslice" Weiss. During the week-long program, students will design and build larger-than-life parade puppets, sculpting giant puppet heads and mounting them on wooden frames with fabric arms and hand rods to create

towering characters.

Inspired by global parade traditions from Chinese New Year dragon puppets to the whimsical creations of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade students will learn about the art, engineering and storytelling behind these festive forms while collaborat-

ing on their own imaginative designs.

The program will conclude with a puppet performance for family and friends on the Berkshire Art Center lawn. Puppets will then be stored by BAC so students can return to march with them in Pittsfield's Annual

Fourth of July Parade on July 4.

For more information or to register, people may visit berkshireartcenter.org. Sponsors are Mass Cultural Council, Feigenbaum Foundation, Lee Bank, Greylock Federal Credit Union, Mill Town, Berkshire

Bank and Rotary Club of Pittsfield

Berkshire Art Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and advancing creativity in the Berkshires through classes, workshops and community art programs for all ages, backgrounds and skill levels.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Chesterfield Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE

Public Hearings will be held starting at 6:30 PM on **Monday, April 6, 2026** in the Davenport Town Offices, 422 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA to consider the following Zoning Bylaw changes. The full proposed changes to the bylaw can be found on the town website, www.townofchesterfieldma.com, and in the Town Clerk's Office.

Section V: SPECIAL USE REGULATION: Amend Section 6.1.3 Accessory Dwelling Unit Standards to delete paragraph which is non-compliant with State Laws that requires ADUs in a Water Supply Protection District (WS) cannot require a Special Permit Review; amend Section 6.1.3.3 to comply with State Laws which do not allow a Special Permit Granting Authority to require more than one parking space.

Section 7.4 SITE PLAN APPROVAL: Amend Section 7.4.22 Application to explicitly allow Special Permit Granting Authority to request funding of

studies under Special Permit Review (MGL Ch 44, Sec.53g).

Section 6.3.4 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL LARGE-SCALE GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION (LSGM-SPI): Amend Section 6.3.4.1 Compliance with Laws, Ordinances and Regulations to require the construction and operation of all LSGMSPI be consistent with all building and fire codes in addition to other requirements.

Sarah Hamilton
Acting Chair, Planning Board
03/19/2026

TOWN OF WORTHINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to MGL 71 section 38N, the Worthington School Committee will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 6:30 PM at R.H. Conwell Elementary School, 147 Huntington Road, Worthington and via Google Meet** to consider the proposed school district budget for Fiscal Year

2027.

School Committee Meeting
via Google Meet
Thursday, April 2, 2026
6:30 - 10:00pm
Join Virtual Meeting
Link: meet.google.com/xho-xahh-dgk
Join by phone:
(US) +1 678-769-4479
PIN: 343357737

Copies of the proposed budget are available in the main office of the R. H. Conwell Elementary School and will be available below on March 13, 2026:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ce3Sn4PkaEDQNp0iNVcxnhGLd4Z24Gcj/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=112661335339212920932&rtoref=true>
03/19/2026

TOWN OF BLANDFORD PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Blandford Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing at the Bland-

ford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008 at **6:00 PM on April 3, 2026**. The nature of this hearing is to present and discuss the proposed replacement of the Blandford Zoning Bylaw pertaining to Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic installations. The proposed bylaw will include Section VIII 8.1 – 8.15.

Section VI11 - Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations

8.1 Purpose and Intent, 8.2 Definitions, 8.3 Applicability and Permitting, 8.4 General Requirements for all Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations, 8.5 Dimension and Density Requirements, 8.6 Design, Site, and Operational Standards, 8.7 Safety and Environmental Standards, 8.8 Monitoring and Maintenance, 8.9 Special Permit Criteria, 8.10 Outside Consultant Fees, 8.11 Severability, 8.12 Enforcement Remedies, 8.13 Appeals, 8.14 Effective Date and Applicability, 8.15 Waivers.

Copies of the proposed By-

law change will be available for review at the Public Hearing and at the Town Hall by appointment only. Contact the Planning Board at Planning@townofblandford.gov to make an appointment during regular business hours.

Greg Garfield, Chair
Blandford Planning Board
03/19, 03/26/2026

**Our advertisers
make this
publication
possible.**
*Let them know you
saw their ad in the*
**Agawam
Advertiser**

ADVERTISING SALES HELP WANTED

- Do you want to work in your community helping local businesses connect with their customers?
- Do you want a career supporting local journalism, which tells the unique stories of our communities?
- If so, then join our team! Turley Publications is looking for an outgoing, energetic person interested in selling advertising for our community newspapers. The right candidate will assume an established territory with a portfolio of customers.

You must be a self-starter with excellent communication and organizational skills. Basic computer skills are required. Previous print sales experience is preferred but we will train the right candidate.

Turley Publications, a locally owned family business, offers a competitive commission structure, 401k, and health plan.

Send resume & cover letter to:

Jamie Joslyn
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069
Email:jamie@turley.com



HELP WANTED

- Produce news and/or feature stories of local interest for various towns and cities.
- Must be dependable, professional and able to meet strict deadlines.
- Salary based on a flat rate by story and photo.

EXPERIENCED WRITERS & JOURNALISTS

Send writing samples with resume to:

GREG SCIBELLI
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069
or email directly to:
gscibelli@turley.com



3 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY

If you're enjoying this FREE edition of the *Country Journal*

PLEASE CONSIDER SUBSCRIBING

Current recipients of our weekly paper, receive town news, updates, local stories and articles of interest throughout the Hilltowns.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Get the Country Journal mailed directly to your home!



Each week you'll receive

TOWN HALL NEWS • BUSINESS HAPPENINGS • AREA EVENTS • SPORTS
COMMUNITY STORIES • SCHOOL COVERAGE • CLASSIFIEDS & MORE!

1

Use our website to securely subscribe online at COUNTRYJOURNAL.TURLEY.COM

2

CALL US
1-413-283-8393
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER!

Yes!

I want to subscribe to the *Country Journal*

Enclosed is my payment for:

- CHECK ENCLOSED
- CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD

- \$31 1 year in state
- \$36 1 year out of state
- \$46 2 year in state
- \$56 2 year out of state

3

- New**
- Renewal**
- Gift**

A GIFT CARD WILL BE SENT TO ANNOUNCE YOUR GIFT!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Credit Card #: _____

Exp. Date: _____ CW2 code: _____

Signature _____

GIFT TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please complete this form, and mail it in a secure envelope to:
Country Journal, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069

CJ25TMC