

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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

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BLANDFORD

COA offers St. Patrick's Day fare

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Once again Kitchen Cuisinière extraordinaire Joann Martin dazzled appetites for a traditional St. Patrick's Day feast of corned beef and cabbage with carrots, potatoes and a slice of her family's Irish Soda Bread.

The soda bread recipe is a long-held secret of her family; sweet rather than the savory variety that relies on caraway seeds for its flavor.

According to Martin, she prepared 40 pounds of

COA, page 5



Waiting for the ok to line up for corned beef and cabbage, from the left, Sue and Ron Racine, Peter Langmore, Dawn Schile, Co and TJ Cousineau. Turley photo by Mary Kronholm



Servers Deb Lundgren and Judith MacKinnon fill plates for Lucia Sullivan, followed by Mary Mangini and TJ Cousineau.



Wanda Deitner has her corned beef and cabbage.

HUNTINGTON

Gateway budget vote postponed

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Gateway Regional School Committee held their monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 12.

While they had enough members present to pass policies and hear reports, the big agenda item passing the Fiscal Year 2026 budget did not have the two thirds attendance required for a budget vote. It was a relatively small public turnout for a budget vote, with no town officials present and only ten people in the audience of the Gateway Performing Arts Center, most of whom were district administrators.

One parent from Chester Elementary School spoke during the public input session. She reported her son came home from school saying that two students entered his classroom, started screaming and throwing things around, with the rest of the class having to get behind the teacher's desk.

"When he told me that today, I didn't want to send him to school tomorrow," she said. She recognized that substitute principal Mark Folta "is

trying, but things are not in good shape." Her son also told her that students, who are causing trouble are being rewarded with an upcoming trip to Six Flags or by going out and playing basketball with Folta.

School Committee member Jeana Briggs, who also has a child at Chester Elementary School, responded, "I told her not to come tonight. You guys don't care" waving toward the rest of the committee. Parents have been coming to school committee meetings since February with concerns about the absence of Principal Vanna Maffuccio, who was placed on an administrative leave in December.

The School Committee held their annual budget hearing on March 5, to present the budget to town officials and the public and answer questions. Voting on the coming year's budget typically takes place the following week, but requires that 67% percent of the committee's seats vote in the affirmative, in order to pass. Superintendent Kristen Smidy later explained that Huntington

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HUNTINGTON

HFD launches free app for the community

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Fire Chief Joshua Ellinger and Assistant Chief John McVeigh announce a

new app for community use that will improve residents' ability to quickly communicate with responders in an emergency.

Called MyLocalSafety, the new app is free to all members of the community and Huntington Fire encourages everyone to download the app to their mobile devices. Also known as the MyLS app, this app allows users to securely upload information about their family, pets and property that emergency responders can access before they arrive on scene.

Each person is free to decide how much information to upload, but should

consider any particular needs of the elderly, disabled or children in the home that will help save valuable time. Residents can also provide information



about potential hazards to responders at the home, such as the location of propane or gas tanks, shut-offs for gas and electricity or any unique issues such as driveway gates, long or narrow driveways or the presence of solar panels on the roof. This information can greatly aid emergency personnel.

Huntington Fire will be holding several question and answer meetings this month to demonstrate how the app works and discuss the benefits. These will take place at Stanton Hall on Saturdays, March 22 and March 29

HFD, page 2

HUNTINGTON

Select Board discusses canoe race, dog kennels

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Select Board met on Wednesday, March 12 at 5 p.m. in Town Hall, with Chair Roger Booth, members Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh, and Town Administrator Jennifer Pelouin all present.

Updates on events for this year's 70th Anniversary Canoe Race celebration and a new system for licensing dog kennels in town were among the agenda items reviewed. Kathryn Koegel updated the board on some of the special events leading up to the platinum jubilee race. An Eras Dance is planned for Saturday, April 12 at Stanton Hall from 6-9 p.m.

Music will cover the past 70 years and people are invited to dress up from their favorite era; a prize for best costume will be awarded. Part celebration and part fundraiser, \$20 per family is a suggested donation. Koegel said the committee has decided that the chicken dance will serve as the official hilltown dance at the event saying, "I think we need silly right now" Pizza

and punch (no alcohol) will be served.

Koegel said they have 130 racers signed up so far, but are short on sponsors. Police presence alone will cost \$9,000 on race day, Koegel said. Also, according to the race's Facebook Page, the first event of a three-part speaker's series will take place on Thursday, March 20 from 6:30-8 p.m. at Stanton Hall. The topic will be the Indigenous History of the Westfield River—a historical look at the first people to live along, fish, and paddle the Westfield River. This event is free, but a \$10 donation is suggested to support the canoe races.

Koegel is also part of a group that has also been working on restoring river access for the public. Booth said the Westfield River was once named the Number 1 fly fishing river in New England, and Number 10 in the country.

In recent years, pub-



Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth

lic access to the Westfield River has been eliminated and Mass. Fish and Wildlife is no longer stocking the river as a result. A "Take Us To The River Rally" is planned for Sunday, May 18 and attendees should come prepared to discuss how trash can be managed if access is reopened. American Whitewater, Trout Unlimited and the Westfield River Fly Fishing groups will step up with others to do trash clean up, Koegel said. She has also spoken with a trash company that routinely travels up Route 20 and might pick up trash in exchange for publicity. Booth reiterated the need to get state officials together as part of planning a solution.

Koegel also said she was organizing a flash mob on the town green at noon on Saturday, March 29, where attendees will receive copies of the United States Constitution and take turns reading it aloud.

Fitness class request

Hannah O'Connell then met with the board to see if she could resume leading the fitness classes at Stanton Hall that had been disbanded during Covid. Booth explained that they are no longer letting businesses use Stanton Hall for business purposes.

Executive session

The board moved into executive session to discuss the deployment of or strategy regarding security personnel or devices.

Dog kennels

When they resumed, Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth met to discuss a proposed plan for dog kennel licenses and inspections to meet "Ollie's Law," enacted last September. Dog kennels must be inspected annually with information submitted to the state by June 1. Huntington has eight or nine kennels that are known to the Town Clerk. Fieldstad-Booth and the board reviewed a proposed letter informing kennel owners

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HILLTOWNS

Local libraries participate in 'All Hamptons Read'

All Hamptons Read presents a multi-community reading program centered around Ross Gay's poetry book, "Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude" as part of the National Endowment for the Arts "Big Read" in partnership with the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and the Montague Public Libraries.

While Gay's poetry acknowledges painful aspects of life, his ability to find gratitude and joy in nature and in ordinary moments of kindness and joy is inspiring. The backdrop of the spring's lengthening days and the green-

ing of the beautiful valley will be a time for gathering together at a variety of Big Read events over the next several weeks.

Copies of "Catalog of Unabashed Joy" are available to borrow from the participating libraries in each community. Ebooks and E-audio are also available through Libby. A listing of programs including book discussions, writing workshops and a virtual reading with Gay can be found by visiting <https://forbeslibrary.org/events/all-hamptons-read/>. All of the programs are free and open to the public although some have preregistration due to

attendance limits.

Speared by the public libraries in Northampton, Florence, Easthampton, Southampton, Westhampton, and Williamsburg, All Hamptons Read is partnering to give readers throughout the region the opportunity to come together annually for discussion and exploration around the themes of a book. It was formed in 2013 when the libraries in the five communities decided to encourage their communities to read the same book and then attend discussions and events to explore the

themes of the book. "All Hamptons Read is all about the power of reading and engaging with story to bring us together and further our understanding of ourselves and our communities," said Lisa Downing, Director at the Forbes Library.

All Hamptons Read is supported by the participating libraries of All Hamptons Read and by the National Endowment for the Arts along with the Springfield Public Forum, The Care Center, and other libraries, organizations and businesses in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties.

CHESTER

Hamilton Library seeks donations for book sale

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., is accepting donations of good used books, audio books and DVDs in gently used or good condition, for their annual fundraiser

held on Saturday May 17 during Chester On Track. Donations are being accepted at the library from now until Saturday May 17 and can be dropped in the off hours drop box when we are closed. Thanks for support.



HUNTINGTON

Wild and Scenic Westfield River Committee announces events

HUNTINGTON – In honor of the 70th running of the Westfield River Whitewater Races, the Race committee is hosting a series of talks celebrating the past, present and future of the Westfield River on Thursdays, March 20, 17 and April 3 from 6:30-8 p.m. in Stanton Hall.

The Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee will sponsor the First People – Indigenous History on Thursday, March 20 from 6:30-8 p.m. in Stanton Hall. Woronocow was once a village of over 1,000 Native people who fished, hunted, and planted along the river's banks for thousands of years. Dr. Margaret Bruchac, from the University of Pennsylvania, will give a talk and shed light on the

life of Rhoda Rhoades, the Mohican "Indian Doctress."

Vernal Pool Plunge continues in the hands of the Hilltown Land Trust. They are coordinating outings for anyone interested in helping protect these unique habitats. People may email mariel@hilltownlandtrust.org or visit <https://www.hilltownlandtrust.org/vernal-pool-plunge>.

The Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee is seeking volunteers to work with us at Hill and Dale on Race Day Saturday, April 19. They support the rescue team, helping with rope throw, baling out boats and getting the racers back underway. They also sponsor the Porta Potties to help keep the river clean.

The races are an excit-

ing time for our region and it's the 70th anniversary.

For all the information about the race itself, sign ups and fabulous pre-race clinics on the Saturdays, April 5 and April 12, people may visit <https://www.westfielddriver.org/races.html>.

The Wild & Scenic "Otter Boat" will be in the parade for Chester on Track Saturday, May 17 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., off Route 20, in Chester and will have booth.

They will be launching "Rooting out Barberry" campaign assisting land owners with recognizing, removing and replacing these tick harboring plants.

They will be hosting workdays with ID and removal training Saturdays, May 31, June 14 and June 28.

BUDGET

from page 1

has a vacancy on the school committee, which counts as a "no" vote on the budget and a member representing Montgomery, who was voted in on a write-in ballot last year has yet to attend a meeting. Coupled with additional members, who were unable to attend, the committee failed to reach the required quorum.

According to the agenda, votes that could not be taken were the FY 26 Chester Elementary School Cost Center total of \$1,494,787; the FY 26 Gateway Regional School Cost Center total of \$5,132,480, and the FY26 Annual Budget total of \$18,254,669. Smidy explained that the first two motions (Chester Elementary and Gateway Regional School cost centers) are separated out because a few school committee members have to recuse themselves from that portion of the budget, having family members, who work for those schools. Budget information is posted to Clear Gov and a link to Gateway's budget is on the website's school committee page. A special school committee meeting will be held on Monday, March 17 via zoom to try to complete these votes.

In other business, enough members were present to vote approval of three policies on physical restraint, home school-

ing and wellness. A fourth vocational admission policy that was listed on the agenda was not considered at this meeting. Smidy later explained that students from other districts cannot currently access Gateway's two Chapter 74 programs (welding and early education and care) because they are not part of a five-shop exploratory, which she believes is an inequitable practice. Smidy said that DESE agrees, but has not given her a way to actually provide access to students beyond Gateway. "Meanwhile, they've been asking me for an approved application process, which feels like a bit of a slap in the face since students from outside the district can't apply," Smidy said.

The FY26 School Calendar was also approved. Staff will return Aug. 25-27, and students will start on Aug. 28. If there are no snow days, an unlikely occurrence, the final day of school would be Thursday, June 12; an additional day will be added for each snow day in the coming year.

Communications from a number of people also took place, with student representative Theodore DeAngelis-Page talking about numerous activities, including a trip by students and staff to observe their advisory program and collect both positive and negative input.

The winter sports banquet is coming up and the spring concert will take place in early May. Littleville Elementary School has launched a composting program and is starting a butterfly garden. Administration did a Valentine's Day walk through at Chester Elementary School and also held a surprise party for interim secretaries Donna Morrissey and Debbie Robbins who have been filling in at the school.

Briggs asked Chairperson Jason Forgue about the investigation into Maffuccio's leave. Forgue reported that it is underway and the deadline for the final report was the end of March.

Smidy shared that there are two educational advocacy days coming up, the first at UMASS with the Joint Ways and Means Committee. Only invited guests can present but are expected to speak in support of rural school aid, regional transportation reimbursement and Chapter 70 Funding. Another hearing will be held in Boston on Tuesday, April 8, where public testimony can be given. Gateway expects to send a group of students and staff again this year.

Other than the remote budget vote on March 17, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 9 at 7 p.m. at Gateway Regional School.

HFD

from page 1

from 6-8 p.m.

The MyLS app will also allow the Huntington Fire Department to effectively message users about important emergencies such as road closures, safety or other information in a way that is easily and instantly communicated.

"We are excited to bring this app to our community and are confident that this will help us in responding to emergencies," Ellinger said. "This is the digital equivalent of the old 'save my child' and 'save my pet'

window stickers, but far better." Ellinger added that the information residents enter into their app will automatically populate to the department's IamResponding app, which the firefighters already use.

"We are very hopeful that the community will use this free app so that we can better protect their homes and families," McVeigh said.

The MyLocalSafety app is available for download for free from both the Apple App Store for Apple devices and the Google Play

Store for Android devices. More information and links to download the app can be found by visiting www.MyLocalSafety.com. After downloading the app and setting up their user name and password, they will be prompted to enter a code (184342) to connect their account to the Huntington Fire Department.

For inquiries, people may email Chief Josh Ellinger Firedept@huntingtonma.us or call 413-512-5212.

SELECT BOARD

from page 1

of changes in Massachusetts General Laws, including inspections needing to be done by the Animal Control Officer. Also, each dog in a kennel will now need proof of rabies vaccination and their own individual dog license, which will go with the dog if it is sold. According to the town's bylaws, inspection fees range from \$25 to \$100 based upon the number of dogs in a kennel; these fees will go to the Animal Control Officer, Jim Helems. Dog licenses will

be \$10 for intact dogs and \$6 for neutered males and spayed females. Booth suggested looking at a bylaw change to cap the kennel inspection at \$50, now that owners must pay for individual dog licenses. Dog license fees are set by the state, Fieldstad-Booth said.

Other business

Other business completed included approving the annual waste management contract through Hilltown Resource Management

Corporation (once the Board of Health confirms approval); extending the landscaping contract to Limited Budget for the coming season, and agreement on scheduling the ever-source pole issue continuation hearing, now that they have responses from the select board's questions. Abutters will be notified of the date via postcard.

The next meeting of the Huntington Select Board will be Wednesday, March 26 at 5 p.m. in Town Hall.

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH



Here is the full cast of "Something Rotten."



Shown are Eamonn Hilnbrand as Nigel Bottom, far left, Amelia Gilman as Portia (on couch), Ezra Gilman as Will Shakespeare and Matt Cesare as Nick Bottom in a scene from Hampshire Regional High School's production of "Something Rotten."



Seniors Emily O'Connell as Bea and Matt Cesare as Nick Bottom are shown during a dress rehearsal.

HRHS presents 'Something Rotten'

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional High School, 19 Stage Road, presents the hilarious musical production of "Something Rotten" with performances on Friday, March 21 and Saturday, March 22 at 7 p.m. and Sunday March 23 at 2 p.m. in the school auditorium.

Ticket prices are \$15 for adults general admission, \$10 for seniors and children under 18 and \$5 for Hampshire Regional High School students and staff. Tickets are available by calling 413-437-5582, emailing hrhstickets@gmail.com, at the door or by visiting this GoFan link:

at <https://gofan.co/app/school/MA23946>.

The musical program is grateful for the support of local businesses and organizations with special thanks to Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Cultural Councils of Chesterfield, Goshen, Southamptn, Westhampton, Williamsburg and Worthington for their financial support.

"Something Rotten" is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International. All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI at www.mtishows.com.



Earl MacDonald

HCC hosts annual Jazz Festival March 28-29

HOLYOKE – The annual Holyoke Community College Jazz Festival returns for its 26th year on Friday, March 28, with pianist, composer and educator Earl MacDonald, joining the Amherst Jazz Orchestra and members of the HCC jazz faculty for a big band concert.

The Friday, March 28 show begins at 8 p.m. in HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater in the Fine & Performing Arts building on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Avenue. The concert is free for HCC students, faculty and staff, and \$10 for the general public.

MacDonald, the former musical director and pianist for trumpeter Maynard Ferguson, is director of Jazz Studies at the University of Connecticut and teaches

annually at the Jazz in July program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"I met Earl MacDonald at the Jazz in July program at UMass and worked with him there in the summertime," said HCC jazz professor Bob Ferrier, the jazz festival organizer. "He's a great educator, great piano player, and on top of it, a great guy."

Led by trombonist David Sporny, the Amherst Jazz Orchestra has been a mainstay of the HCC Jazz Festival since the first in 1998.

On Saturday, March 29, starting at 10 a.m. in the Fine & Performing Arts Building, MacDonald and members of the HCC Jazz Festival faculty will lead improvisation clinics, demonstrations, and

jam sessions for area high school and college musicians. Saturday events are free and open to the public.

The Winnipeg, Canada, native earned degrees from McGill University and Rutgers University, where he apprenticed with jazz master Kenny Barron.

The Amherst Jazz Orchestra, led by trombonist David Sporny, has been a mainstay of the HCC Jazz Festival since the first one in 1998.

For more information, people may call Bob Ferrier at 413-552-2480, email rferrier@hcc.edu or call Mary Starzyk at 413-552-2485 or email mstarzyk@hcc.edu. To learn more about guest artist Earl MacDonald, people may visit earlmacdonald.com.

COLLEGE NOTES

Colleges, universities announce Dean's List

DEAN'S LIST College of Holy Cross Worcester

Olivia Lawry of Westfield, class of 2026

Grove City College Grove City, Pennsylvania

Sarah Miller of Westfield, senior Christian ministries major

Hamilton College Clinton, New York

Jessie Paradis Stern of Westhampton, junior majoring in environmental studies

Hartwick College Oneonta, New York

May Lieberman-Bachman of Huntington, art major

University of Twin Cities Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

Kathryn Barrett of Sandisfield, non degree College of Continuing and Professional Studies

Emmanuel College Boston

Bushra Khan of Westfield, biology and health

sciences major

Ryan Lambert of Westfield, psychology and counseling and health psychology major

Brandon Shuman of Westfield, finance major

Lydia Donatelli of West Chesterfield, nursing major

Rowan McDonald of Westfield, nursing major

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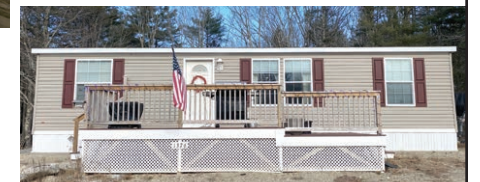
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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

Can I avoid aying the Medicare premium?

Dear Rusty:

Is there any way I can get out of paying the \$185 I am told will be taken out of my Social Security for Medicare Part B when I turn 65?

We pay for Medicare all our working lives, and now I have to pay a monthly premium for insurance that only covers 80%.

**Signed:
Disheartened Senior**

Dear Disheartened:

For clarification, the money you paid into Medicare while working during your lifetime was for Medicare Part A, inpatient hospitalization coverage. The Medicare taxes paid while working entitled you to free Medicare coverage for Part A, inpatient hospitalization coverage, but they do not entitle you to Medicare coverage for outpatient services coverage for doctors, medical tests, etc.. For that

coverage from Medicare, you must enroll in Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium (\$185 per month for 2025). If you wish to have Medicare Part B coverage, you must enroll in Medicare Part B at age 65, unless you have other "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer.

The Medicare Part B premium will be automatically deducted from your Social Security payment when you enroll in Medicare and there is no way to avoid it if you wish to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient medical services. But, if you currently have "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer, you can delay enrolling in Medicare Part B (thus avoiding the premium)



until your employer coverage ends.

If you don't enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period at 65 or in a Special Enrollment Period following the end of your creditable employer healthcare coverage, then you will incur a penalty for enrolling in Medicare Part B outside of the prescribed enrollment periods. That penalty is a permanent increase in your Medicare Part B premium. FYI, "creditable" is an employer group plan with at least 20 participants.

We do not advise going without outpatient healthcare coverage, so you should

carefully consider enrolling in Medicare Part B when you turn 65. If you are already collecting Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled, but you can opt out of Part B if you wish – it's just not advisable, unless you have current creditable healthcare coverage from an employer.

So, to recap: the Medicare taxes you paid while working only entitled you to free Medicare Part A inpatient hospitalization coverage. You must enroll in Medicare Part B (for which there is a monthly premium) to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient healthcare services. Both Medicare Part A and Part B have deductibles and copayments, for which you may wish to consider getting either a supplemental

insurance plan or a Medicare Advantage plan. But, in either case, you must still have both Medicare Part A and Part B to obtain such additional healthcare coverage.

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 ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

Country Journal TEAM



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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.

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Grateful for the March garden

I don't know about you, but those first few warmer days do something to my brain. I begin to expect that we are in for nice weather all the time.

It's easy to start dreaming and scheming, but alas, we are not exactly on a fast track to summer just yet, nor should we be. There is much to enjoy about this time of year.

Here are just a few of my favorite things about March.

First on the list is that my however-many-year-old Gerber daisy houseplant gave me a flower, with a couple more on the way. I had three of these plants last year. I gave a two away in one of my "less is more" moods.

Do they bloom as well as they did when they were a year old? No, but that bright and cheery daisy in seashell pink was just the pick-me-up I needed last week.

Soon, you will see Gerber daisies for sale in the grocery stores and plant nurseries. Try overwintering one in a bright but cool window next winter for your own dose of pre-spring happiness.

After the size 10 foot-print landed on the corner

of my front border, in exactly the spot that I planted some tulip bulbs last fall, I made a fence out of apple tree prunings. What a fun March activity!

I bent each long piece into a U shape and plunged the ends into the ground, starting the next one in the middle of the one prior. That outta keep my husband off the bulbs; I hope at least.

Speaking of prunings, I have started to accumulate "pea brush." I'll be sowing pea seeds in the next few weeks, and although I typically plant the seeds right up against the garden's fence, I am going to need more room this year, and these leftover prunings will be perfect for the tendrils to grab hold of.

I make a wide bed the length of the garden row, insert the prunings in the middle of the row and plant pea seeds four deep up against the branches. In addition to my old stand by, shelling peas, I am going to be sowing sugar snap and

snow peas.

My first experience with sugar snap peas came from harvesting some pods while on a weekend getaway at bed and breakfast. It was a cool little place in southern New Hampshire where you could pick the vegetables from the kitchen garden and eat them for dinner.

It'll be fun to grow my own for fresh eating.

"Pea brush" can also be used to support annual or perennial flowers that tend to have weak or floppy stems. The brush blends into the scenery a little better than stakes and twine, and it's easily dismantled when the time comes.

My favorite March bulb is a harbinger of all harbingers, the Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*).



Snowdrop

Toughened points on the leaf tips make it possible for the snowdrop to push through the crusty soil of late winter.

Two or three strappy leaves grow from each bulb; most often there is just one flower. You'll notice three white outer petals first and upon closer inspection you'll see green tipped inner petals.

The flowers are held on the stem in a nodding fashion and in my experience they stay in bloom for upwards of three weeks. Reportedly they are well adapted for bees, at least those that are brave enough to venture out of the hive in search of pollen during the warmest days of late winter!

Snowdrops will naturalize if happy, increasing in numbers both above and below the ground! Although we "deadhead" most bulbs, keeping spent flower heads of this genus in place will allow seeds to ripen and new plants to form.

It is interesting to

observe the process of a snowdrop self-sowing. Once the flower has gone by a large seed will form; because of its weight, the stem will bend toward the ground dropping its ripe seed at a perfect distance from the mother plant.

Under no circumstances should the foliage of a bulb be removed until it is brown and dry. It may not be the most beautiful to look at, but all the while that it is green it is making and storing food for next year's flowers.

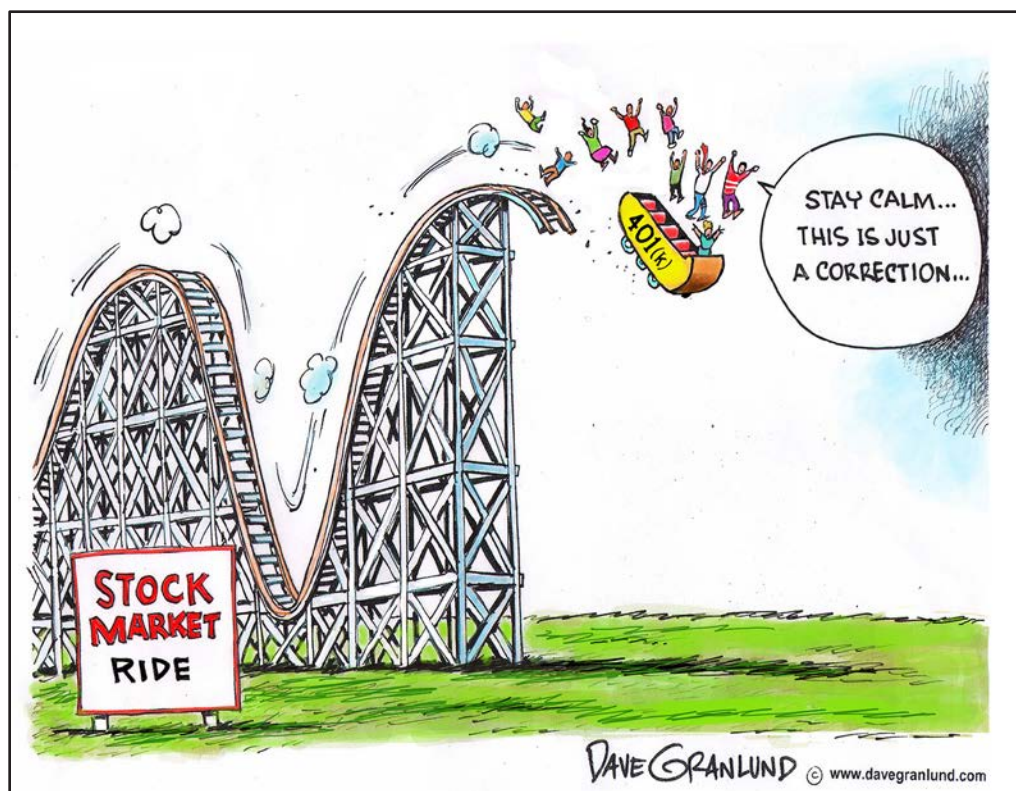
Enjoy these early days in and around the garden.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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 in the same section where the error originally occurred.



Election letters to the editor welcome

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*.

BLANDFORD

‘Swap Shop’ to open soon at Transfer Station

BLANDFORD – The “Swap Shop” building was constructed with One Stop state grant funds.

Shelves will be constructed inside the 20 by 30 foot building and tables set up for all sorts of usable items.

Bret Hartley is Chairman of the Board of Health and manages the Transfer Station.

He hopes to have the Swap Shop functioning next month.

Details will be worked out at the April Board of Health meeting, according to Hartley.



Bret Hartley stands in front of the “almost completed” Swap Shop building at the Blandford Transfer Station.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

PLEASE
REMEMBER TO
RECYCLE THIS
NEWSPAPER

Blandford receives donation of military service flags

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Town Administrator Cristina Ferrara reported the town received a “generous anonymous donation” of military service flags to be flown at Veterans’ Park at Town Common.

“This is a wonderful gesture,” she said.

State Forest new entrance

The Conservation Commission is proposing a new project from the Department of Conservation and Recreation which will potentially create a new entrance to Chester-Blandford State Forest on the Blandford side. “This will provide more convenient access to the park for our town,” she said.

Town Administrator

The new Town Accountant, Kelli Pontbriand spent an entire day with Ferrara last week. “Things are going very well, so far,” said Ferrara

She has contacted Town Counsel regarding the potential Climate Change Leader Community designation. KP-Law has confirmed that the Select Board can appoint an ad hoc advisory committee, which would be subject to the Open Meeting Law and would be required to create and post agendas and minutes.

However, before forming this committee, residents interested in participating need to speak with the Select Board as a group and outline all the required actions the state requires.

If the board decides to move forward with the formation of the commit-

tee there would need to be a bylaw that outlines the charge of the group, according to Ferrara; also, another requirement would be that the town must vote to adopt a specialized stretch energy code and to create a plan for the required municipal decarbonization roadmap.

Specialized Code

According to the DOER, “As a climate change leader, Massachusetts has adopted a ‘Specialized Stretch Energy Code’ (also known as the “Specialized Code”) which builds on the updated Stretch Code and pushes new construction towards net-zero building performance through deep energy efficiency, reduced heating loads, and efficient electrification.” More information can be found at mass.gov on the Department of Energy Resources site.

JUST ANOTHER FOGGY MORNING IN THE HILLTOWNS



Saturday morning passing by the Blandford Fairgrounds on North Street, visibility was barely two utility poles ahead. As Mary Powers would caution, “We’re in Brigadoon.”

Turley Publications photos by Photo by Kronholm



There was a delicious, basket full of Irish soda bread from a secretly held Martin family recipe.



Grandpa Paul Dirschka with granddaughter, I’d rather do it myself, Lyra Dirschka who turns two on March 24.



Table decorations reflect the Irish festivities.

Turley photos by Mary Kronholm

COA

corned beef, four large heads of cabbage, ten pounds of carrots, ten pounds of red potatoes and four large onions. There were over 30 diners.

There was a lot of green on everyone and everything. The beverage glasses had been rimmed in green

sugar to emphasize the special day and held a mix of ginger/limeade with rainbow sherbet with a touch of green food coloring.

Diners polished off their meal with Crème de Menthe cake for dessert baked by Margit Mikuski, Judith MacKinnon and Deb

Lundgren, along with coffee or tea.

March 17 commemorates Saint Patrick’s Day or the Feast of Saint Patrick, which is celebrated every year in Ireland as a religious holiday and by Irish communities around the world recognizing Irish culture.

Saint Patrick died in the fifth century and March 17 recognizes the coming of Christianity to Ireland, a holiday celebrated for over 1,000 years.

And in Massachusetts, March 17 is celebrated as a Suffolk County Holiday, or Evacuation Day – no

reference to ridding anywhere of snakes – but ridding Boston of the British after an 11-month siege during the early days of the Revolutionary War.

General George Washington had his first victory in March 1776 with the strength provided by the can-

nons captured at Ticonderoga and Crown Point on Lake Champlain.

The cannons came through Blandford during the winter months on what is now referred to as the Knox Trail. There is more to March 17 than St. Patrick.

from page 1

BECKET

Becket Athenaeum list events

BECKET – Towards the end of March and into April, the Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., will be wrapping up their Big Read with four exciting programs.

Nature Journaling for the New Season with Lara Tupper will take place on Sunday, March 30 at 11a.m. (registration required bwlibrary.org/spring) and “The Bear” Book Discussion at Route 8 Pub, (RSVP appreciated bwlibrary.org/beer) will take place on

Thursday, April 10 at 6 p.m. There will be Debris Shelter Building with Taz on Monday, April 21 at 2 p.m. outdoors at Becket or Washington (registration required at bwlibrary.org/shelter) and finally, the in-person gathering with Andrew Krivak, author of “The Bear” at the Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road on Wednesday, April 30 at 7 p.m. (RSVP appreciated at bwlibrary.org/krivak)

The Becket Athenaeum

will be closing on March 26 at 6 p.m. Ongoing activities include Mindful Making for Teens second and fourth Thursdays through April from 5:30-7 p.m., story time with stay and play Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. (RSVP appreciated: bit.ly/BA-storytime; Baby and Toddler Playgroup Tuesdays 10-11 a.m. Saturdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Storytime and Craft and Saturdays from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Stay and Play.

RUSSELL

COA hosts tag, craft, bake sales

RUSSELL – On Saturday, May 3, the Russell Council on Aging will host a Tag Sale from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on the lawns outside the Senior Center at the Russell Town Hall, 65 Main St, and across the street in the Veterans Memorial Park.

It’s a good time to start spring cleaning and clean

out those odds and ends. People can have some fun, sell some stuff and make some money. A 12-ft x 12-ft site is just \$20 including the Town of Russell tag sale permit fee.

Vendors must supply their tables, chairs and tents if desired. They should send their name, contact information and payment to

Russell COA, P.O. Box 407, Russell, MA 01071 or place it in the town’s drop box.

People may call Carrie Florek at 413-862-6217 or e-mail coa@townofrussell.us with further questions.

All proceeds will benefit programs and activities for the Russell Council on Aging. The rain date is Saturday, May 10.

OTIS

Otis to hold caucus April 15

OTIS – The town of Otis will hold a caucus at the Otis Town Hall on Tuesday, April 15 from 7-8 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates to be voted on at the Annual Town Election on Tuesday, May 27.

The following offic-

es to be nominated are one Assessor for three years, one Cemetery Commissioner for three years, one Finance Board Member for two years, one Finance Board Member for three years, one Library Trustee for three years, one Moderator for

one year, one Planning Board Member for two years, one Planning Board Member for five years, one School Committee Member for three years, one Select Person for three years, one Tree Warden for one year and one Town Clerk for three years.

Library to host book sale

OTIS – The Friends of the Otis Library will be hosting their book sale and more event at the Otis Ridge Ski Lodge, 159 Monterey Road, on Saturday, May 3 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

All donations of gently

used books, adult or children’s games and puzzles, CDs and DVDs can be dropped off at the Otis Library 48 North Main Road, during regular hours through the month of April on Wednesday and Friday from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursday

noon-6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

People should not bring moldy. For questions, they may call the library at 413-269-0109 or email FriendsOtisLibrary@gmail.com.

CHESTERFIELD

Rabies clinic takes place April 5

CHESTERFIELD – A rabies clinic will take place on Saturday, April 5 from 10 a.m.-noon at the Chesterfield Fire Department., 5 North Road.

The clinic hosted by the

Chesterfield Fire Department is for cats and dogs. All towns are welcome. Cost is \$26 for rabies and \$68 for microchip and lifetime membership. Veterinarian on site is Dr. Samantha Clay of

South Deerfield Veterinary Clinic. People may email Animal Control Officer Kelli Wainscott with questions at aco@townofchesterfieldma.com.

SOUTHWICK

Southwick Land Trust offers lecture on mushrooms

SOUTHWICK – People can learn about the amazing array of local fungi and some techniques for safely foraging mushrooms at the Bar Shoppe, 106 Point Grove Road, on Wednesday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m.

The Southwick Land

Trust is launching its free lecture series with this presentation about mushrooms by fungi expert, Jonathan Kranz. Kranz is vice-president of the Boston Mycological Club and a board member of the Pioneer Valley Mycological Association.

“Mushrooms, Mushrooms, Mushrooms” will cover what kinds of fungi are commonly seen during prime mushroom season in New England and the tools people can use to identify them. Some are poisonous, some are edible and many can

indicate the state of health of the local ecology. Learn about their range of shapes, sizes, colors and edibility. There will be a question and answer after the presentation and refreshments will be served.

The Southwick Land Trust is a non-profit,

non-governmental organization formed in 2024 by a group of volunteer town residents seeking to protect lands within the community of Southwick. Its mission is to conserve important ecological, scenic, historical and agricultural land and

to promote appreciation of open space while providing accessible recreational opportunities for all, as well as to protect Southwick’s rural heritage and its diverse ecology. People may visit www.SouthwickLandTrust.org for more information.

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EASTHAMPTON

Class S40 graduates residents from Firefighting Academy

SPRINGFIELD – State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy leadership announced the graduation of 12 firefighters from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

“Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today’s graduates are needed now more than ever,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “The hundreds of hours of foundational training they’ve received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely.”

“Massachusetts Firefighting Academy instructors draw on decades of experience in the fire service to train new recruits,” said Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Deputy Director Dennis A. Ball. “Through consistent classroom instruction and practical exercises, today’s graduates have developed the tools they’ll need to work seamlessly with veteran firefighters in their home departments and in neighboring communities as mutual aid.”

The graduating firefight-

ers of Class #S40 represent the fire departments of Athol, Chicopee, Easthampton, Holyoke, Longmeadow, South Hadley Fire District 1, Southbridge and Uxbridge. The class included Jesse Sears and Michael Radke of the Easthampton Fire Department and Aaron Almeda, formerly of the Easthampton Fire Department and currently the Athol Fire Department.

The Richard N. Bangs Outstanding Student Award, which is presented to one recruit in each graduating career recruit training class, was presented to Firefighter Conor Lordan of the Athol Fire Department. The award is named for the longtime chair of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and reflects the recruit’s academic and practical skills, testing, and evaluations over the course of the 10-week program.

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water



Shown are graduates of Class S40 from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. Local graduates include Aaron Almeda formerly of Easthampton Fire Department and as of Feb. 25 Athol Fire Department, Jesse Sears of the Easthampton Fire Department and Michael Radke of the Easthampton Fire Department.

Submitted photo

supply, pump operation and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and are certified to the levels of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations by the

Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

Modern firefighters train for and respond to all types of hazards and emergencies. They are the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies,

ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to gas leaks to industrial chemical spills. They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice, an office worker stuck in an elevator, or a motorist trapped in a crashed vehicle. They test and maintain their equipment, including self-contained

breathing apparatus, hydrants, hoses, power tools and apparatus.

The MFA provides recruit and in-service training for career, call, and volunteer firefighters at every level of experience, from recruit to chief officer, at campuses in Stow, Springfield and Bridgewater.

bankESB promotes Salois to VP

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB recently promoted Meridith Salois to vice president, lending systems manager based at its 241 Northampton St.

Salois of Westfield has nearly 30 years of banking experience. She joined bankESB in 2001 working in loan servicing and collections and moved on to become a credit analyst and eventually vice president, commercial credit systems management. In her new role, she will be evolving

and maintaining the suite of lending information systems, while supporting all aspects of commercial, consumer and residential systems across the bank’s parent company, Hometown Financial Group.

Salois has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and management from Baypath



Meridith Salois

University and earned a certificate from the New England School of Financial Studies. She is a longtime volunteer for Junior Achievement, is the vice president of the LoanVantage User Group Board, and has been the education and training booth chair for Westfield Credit for Life since 2019.



Shown from left are Easthampton Firefighters Aaron Almeda and Michael Radke, both recent graduates of Class S40.

Submitted photo

NORTHAMPTON



H|A| Architecture made this rendering of the soon to be constructed outdoor performance state for the Forbes Library, 20 West St., Northampton. Rendering courtesy of H|A| Architecture

Forbes Library to construct outdoor performance stage

NORTHAMPTON – Forbes Library, 20 West St., will be breaking ground on a new outdoor performance stage later this month.

H|A| Architecture based in Northampton designed the accessible, open air, covered stage for the library’s west lawn. The stage will support a wide variety of programs including concerts, children’s programming and outdoor movies.

“We have a long history of outdoor programming at Forbes. It began over a century ago with communi-

ty singing events. This stage will be a wonderful addition to the library’s gathering spaces and enjoyed for years to come,” said Lisa Downing, Library Director. The stage will be available for use by community groups in addition to hosting library programming.

The stage includes ramping to provide handicap access to the stage and the viewing area. It will have electricity, lighting and a durable metal roof that will hold solar panels to power it. Campora Construction based

in Ludlow will be building the \$289,000 project. Funding for the stage comes from American Rescue Plan Act funds distributed by the city of Northampton, a state earmark secured by Senator Comerford, a major gift by the Friends of Forbes Library and over \$125,000 in private donations. Additional funds are being raised to add audio-visual equipment and landscaping.

Construction will be completed in June and the stage will be ready for use later this summer.

Freedom Credit accepts donations for Shriners Children’s Hospital

SPRINGFIELD – During March, Freedom Credit Union invites the community to donate money at any of its branches throughout western Massachusetts to Shriners Children’s New England in Springfield, which provides spinal cord and orthopedic care, cleft lip and palate repair, sports medicine and urology care.

“Shriners performs miracles every day, treating children and their families with compassion as they experience unimaginable challenges,” said Freedom Credit Union President Glenn Welch. “We’re proud to sup-

port their transformative work.”

Shriners Children’s helps children overcome medical challenges and reach their full potential regardless of their families’ ability to pay.

Every month, Freedom Credit Union collects donations for a different charity as part of its Month of Giving campaigns. Money collected through the end of March will support the Shriners Children’s mission to provide life-changing care for children and their families.

“We’re always grateful to have such a generous community,” said Welch. “Every contribution makes an

impact.”

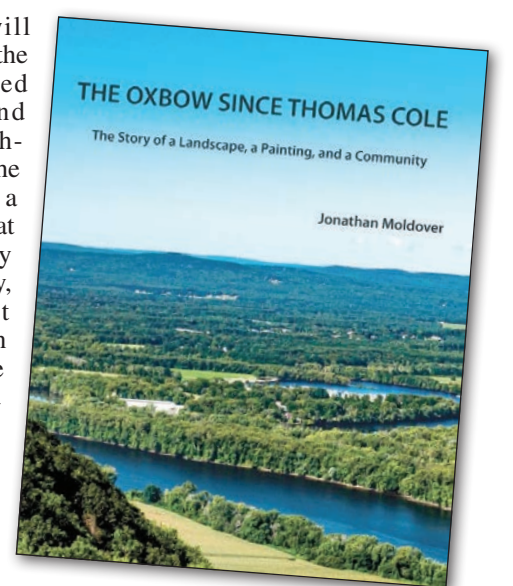
Originally chartered in 1922 as the Western Massachusetts Telephone Workers Credit Union and renamed in 2004, Freedom Credit Union is a 9-branch, full-service financial institution. Offering a complete range of banking services and loan products, Freedom Credit Union has conveniently located Massachusetts branches in Chicopee, Feeding Hills, Greenfield, Ludlow, Northampton, Turners Falls, West Springfield and two in Springfield, as well as a Loan Production Office in Enfield, Connecticut.

Author Jonathan Moldover scheduled to speak March 26

NORTHAMPTON – Jonathan Moldover, author of “The Oxbow Since Thomas Cole: The Story of a Landscape, a Painting, and a Community,” presents an illustrated talk about the community which has developed on the Oxbow since the late nineteenth century, accompanied by video clips from the oral history project which was the basis of the book.

Uncover how nature as well as political and business interests have changed the island and the remarkable resilience of the Oxbow community.

Attendees will discover why the island crossed the river and why the highway crossed the island. This is a free program at Forbes Library on Wednesday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m. in the Coolidge Museum and streamed live. People may visit forbeslibrary.org for more information.



WORTHINGTON

SAYING GOODBYE TO LAST DAYS OF WINTER



This ice formation is along Route 112 in Worthington and was taken on March 9.



Mighty Westfield River running wild, getting ready for a canoe race in April.
Turley Publications photos by Deborah Daniels

STOCKBRIDGE

MassDOT announces bridge repair work on I-90 westbound

STOCKBRIDGE – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces bridge repair work will be conducted on I-90 westbound at mile marker 6.4.

The work will take place now through Friday, March 21 during the hours of 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day.

Drivers traveling through this area should

expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. Appropriate signage and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work area. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions

or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real-time traffic conditions and project information before setting out on the road.

Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

CUMMINGTON

Historical Commission offers \$2K William W. Street History Award

CUMMINGTON – The Cummington Historical Commission invites all graduating students, who have been accepted to any accredited two or four-year college or

university and who are residents of Cummington, to apply for the \$2000 William W. Streeter History Award.

A five-page essay or multimedia presentation must

be received by Thursday, May 15. People may visit <https://cummingtonhistoricalcommission.weebly.com/scholarship-guidelines.html> for details.

WESTFIELD

St. Joseph's to hold Italian dinner

WESTFIELD – St. Joseph's National Catholic Church, 73 Main St., is hosting an Italian Dinner on Sunday, March 30 at noon.

Dinner will feature baked three cheese manicotti in a marinara sauce, homemade meatballs, tossed garden salad and Italian bread. This is followed by a dessert

of Panna Cotta and Italian cookies. Beverages include hot coffee, bottled water and iced tea. Everyone is welcome.

Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. To purchase tickets and reserve their place, text or telephone Cliff at 413-977-2007 and if leaving a

message, provide name and telephone number. Take-out/meals-to-go will be available for pick-up at 12:30 p.m. When ordering tickets, people should indicate if dinners are to-go. The deadline for purchasing tickets is Wednesday, March 26. All are invited to attend a delicious Italian meal and fun raffle.

PITTSFIELD

Downtown Pittsfield and Framework hold brand-new photography exhibit

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and Framework will feature a brand-new photography exhibition by Allan Seppa, Sunday, April 6 through Thursday, May 22 at Framework by Downtown Pittsfield, Inc., 437 North St.

The exhibition will feature photography of Southwest America, specifically of Arizona, Utah and Colorado. There will be an opening reception with the artist on Sunday, April 6 from 10 a.m.-noon and the artist will host a second reception during the Friday, May 2 First Fridays Artwalk from 5-8 p.m.

Allan Seppa's exhibition will be on view Monday

through Thursday, 10 am to 2 pm, April 7 through Thursday, May 22, by visiting the Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. offices at 431 North St.

Allan started being serious about photography in the late 1960s, when he bought his first 35mm SLR film camera and signed up for the comprehensive correspondence course offered by the former Famous Photographers School of Westport, Connecticut.

Soon after moving to the Berkshires, Allan joined the venerable Berkshire Museum Camera Club. During the many years that he was a member, he won many awards for his color slides in competitions within the club

and ones sponsored by the New England Camera Club Council.

Allan's photographic vision is eclectic and includes landscapes, sea shore scapes, cityscapes, still life, and street photography. Upon retirement, he has exhibited his photos in many gallery and arts and craft shows and other events, including seven First Fridays Artwalks.

Allan lives in Pittsfield. Besides photography, he enjoys hiking and bicycling with his wife.

For more information, people may visit downtownpittsfield.com or call Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. at 413-443-6501.

GRANVILLE



Leon Ripley, right, hands wood to Jim Cortis to feed the fire.



Jim Cortis of Russell, a regular helper at the Ripley Sugar House, feeds the fire to heat the sap



Leon Ripley turns the spigot to allow flow of boiled sap. The liquid is no longer clear, but amber colored.



The crowd in the lodge enjoyed anything that goes with Maple Syrup, whether pancake or French Toast, Saturday morning. Diners filled the front areas and the overflow area as well and there were hungry folks lined up to place orders.



Blandford locals Kate, who had already finished her food, and Lisa Goodrich brought Roisin Quinn from Northampton to savor the flavor at Ripley's.



Meanwhile, back at the lodge, Lilie Ripley cooks the pancakes for diners.
Turley photos by Mary Kronholm

Maple syrup tops the menu at sugar house

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

GRANVILLE – Every late winter and early spring a visit to Maple Corner Farm is a must to savor the breakfast fare and visit the sugar house.

The sugar house where syrup is processed is new

as of 2017 and where Leon Ripley reigns. There is every modern convenience for processing maple sap into syrup and Ripley is happy to enlighten any interested visitor.

Across the road from the sugar house is the lodge where patrons feast on pan-

cakes, French toast, eggs with bacon, sausage, ham or hash and a choice of beverages that includes orange juice, coffee, tea and hot chocolate. There are also made to order breakfast sandwiches.

Saturday morning, March 15 about 9:30 a.m., the lodge parking lot was filled

to capacity. A short trip back to the sugar house opened up many more spots for cars or trucks, but was quickly filled as well.

Inside, maple syrup followers filled all the tables in the two front seating areas and overflowed to the large seating area in the rear.

There about 30 hungry-for-breakfast-fare people lined up waiting at the counter to place their orders.

People came from Westfield, Longmeadow, Russell, Granville, Blandford as well as Connecticut. Some were first-timers, others regulars. Nevertheless, the unspo-

ken message is, if people plan to eat, go early.

Maple Corner Farm, located on Beech Hill Road just over the line in Granville, is open through Sunday, March 30 this year from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. and the sugar house is open from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Shari Lou Fisk, 57

March 8, 1968 - March 10, 2025

Shari was born in Northampton and was a life-long resident of Worthington. She graduated from Gateway Regional High School in 1986 and Bay Path College in 1988. She worked for the Department of Justice as a DEA clerk upon graduation.

Shari was kind and sweet and was loved and will be missed by anyone that ever had the privilege of knowing her.

She was a mem-

ber of the First Congregational Church of Worthington and did volunteer work at Russell H. Conwell Elementary School.

Shari enjoyed playing the piano, taking long walks, watching the Red Sox and she especially loved being in the warm sunshine.



Shari is predeceased by her father, Bradford P Fisk Sr. and her sister and brother in law, Diane and Tim Henry.

She is survived by her mother, Judith Fisk; her brother, Bradford P Fisk II; her sister Kelly Potter (Bart) as well as sister, Donna Tucker (Bill); brother Doug Fisk (Brenda);

sister, Dena Cameron (Gary) as well as many aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank the staff at Linda Manor Extended Care facility and Pioneer Valley Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to: The First Congregational Church of Worthington, P.O. Box 536, Worthington, MA 01098.

No services will be held.

Sue Kellam (née Marshall), 82

Aug. 10, 1942 – March 7, 2025

With heavy hearts, we share the passing of Sue Kellam, 82, of Huntington on March 7, 2025. Sue was a woman of beautiful contradictions both complex and simple, strong yet gentle, witty and sarcastic, yet eternally unwavering in her kindness and dedication. She was a unique character that could have been spirited from the pages of a classic Dickens or Christie novel, imparting vibrant color while lifting the spirits of those privileged to know her.

Born on Aug. 10, 1942, to Richard and Ethel Marshall, Sue grew up in the Springfield area. She was preceded in death by her devoted husband, Joseph Kellam and her cherished brother, Carey Marshall.

For over fifty years, Sue and Joe forged a life-

time partnership, raising a family together in Huntington, where she was deeply involved in the local community. A dedicated member of the First Congregational Church of Huntington, Sue tirelessly served her town in many roles, including Select Board Secretary, Board of Health Secretary, Assessor, and Town Clerk.

Though we grieve this deep and immeasurable loss, we take solace in the love she so freely shared and the radiant memories that will forever inspire our spirits. We imagine Ma Kellam now riding shotgun with Joe in their diminutive red Triumph convertible "Babe," cruising



through the countryside, sunglasses on, wind playfully tugging at her kerchief.

Sue is lovingly remembered by her sister, Ann (Pat) Hunt of Westfield and her five children: Tracey Kellam-Masloski and husband, Jim of Huntington; Joseph Kellam Jr. and wife, Pam of Huntington;

Garrett Kellam of Northampton; Amanda Thayer and husband, Brad of Hatfield and Nichole Smith and husband, Ernest of Wilbraham. She took the greatest pride in her ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, who filled her life with boundless joy and love.

Her memory will remain

etched within our hearts, the affection and wisdom she bestowed upon us all will continue to shine as a guiding light, illuminating our path forever.

Calling hours were Wednesday, March 19, 2025 from 5-7 p.m. at Graham Funeral Home, 18 Adams St., Easthampton, MA 01027. Internment of both Sue and Joe will take place with military honors on Thursday March 20, 2025 at 3 p.m. at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 1390 Main St., Agawam, MA 01001

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis TN 38105, telephone 1-800-822-6344 and web page at: <http://www.stjude.org/>.

Duane C. Pease, 78

1946-2025 Chester, MA

Duane C. Pease, 78 passed away in the comfort of his home on March 6, 2025 after a valiant battle with cancer.

He was the son of Charles C. Pease and Irene H. (Sakaske) Pease, deceased. Duane was a life-long resident of Chester. He was a graduate of Chester High School Class of 64 and Johnson and Wales University.

Duane enjoyed a 40 plus year career as a claims adjuster for the Home Insurance Co. and St. Paul

Insurance Co. After his retirement, he went on to be the Administrative Assistant for 11 years for the town of Middlefield. He was a Chester Selectman, Chester Electric Light Commissioner and a member of the Chester Board of Health. Positions he thoroughly enjoyed.

Duane is survived by his wife, Mary Ann



(Taylor); son, Brendan (Susan) of North Carolina; daughter, Holly (Tommy) Cusack of Westfield; grandchildren, Erin Porterfield, Anna Crawford, Joey Pease and Cameron and Colin Cusack as well as a great-grandson, Forest Porterfield and numerous Pease and Sakaske cousins and two special brothers, Ryan Neuhauser and Ricky

Sakaske.

We would like to thank the staff of Mass General Cancer Center and Baystate Hospice for the comfort and care they have given to Duane and the family.

A memorial celebration will be held in early summer. Anyone wishing to make a donation in Duane's name may do so to Hilltown Community Ambulance, P. O. Box 351, Huntington, MA 01051.

Graham Funeral Home is handling the arrangements for the family.

DEATH NOTICES

FISK, SHARI

Died March 10, 2025
No Services will be held.

KELLAM, SUE (MARSHALL)

Died March 7, 2025
Internment of both Sue and Joe Kellam with military honors will take place March 20 at 3 p.m. Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 1390 Main St., Agawam, MA

PEASE, DUANE C.

Died March 6, 2025
Memorial Celebration to be held early summer.

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 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.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, March 25, 2025** beginning at 6:45 pm in Stanton Hall for changes to the Huntington Zoning Bylaw. The Public Hearing is for: 1) Removing page numbers from the Header of the Zoning Bylaw, leaving page numbers in the Footer, 2) Adding "Protection of the Viewshed" to Section I.B. Purpose as recommended by CPTC (State agency that does Zoning and Planning trainings), 3) Numerous revisions and additions, including a new Section I.V.S: Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw (ADU) to replace the now obsolete Section I.V.S: Accessory Family Dwelling Unit Bylaw (AFDU) required by the Affordable Homes Act, Chapter 150, Sections 7 and 8 of the Acts of 2024 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Replacing that

bylaw also requires changing Section I.F. Definitions and Sections IV.B.1b. and IV.B.1e. under "Residential Uses", 4) Minor revisions to Section IV.I. Signs, to clarify original intent of former changes, 5) Minor revisions to Section V. Special Permits, to clarify original intent of former changes and 6) Replace IV.M. Floodplain District with a new IV.M. Floodplain District Bylaw to comply with updated Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations. All text changes will be available for review at the Public Hearing and at Town Hall **by appointment only** during regular business hours (Monday-Thursday 10-3), as of March 31, 2025.

PLANNING BOARD TOWN OF HUNTINGTON 03/20/2025

Town of Chesterfield Board of Health PUBLIC HEARING

The Chesterfield Board of Health will be conducting a pub-

lic hearing on **April 28, 2025 at 7:15 p.m.** at the Chesterfield Town Office to review and accept the proposed expansion of the Ireland Street Cemetery and the Mount Cemetery. This hearing will be held to hear any concerns of the proposed expansions. Plans can be reviewed at the Town Office, 422 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA.

John Chandler, Chair
Chesterfield Board of Health
03/20/2025

REQUEST FOR SERVICES (RFS)

Porter Memorial Library Design Services

The Town of Blandford is soliciting qualifications for the MPLCP Level of design services for the Porter Memorial Library design services. The MPLCP Level of Design services will be a negotiated fee. The Town may negotiate with the same designer for additional design services such as design development, surveys plans, specifications, bid

phase and construction phase services, FF&E, and close out services, etc.

Designer Selection Services are being procured under M.G.L. c. 7c §§44-57

A **Mandatory** briefing and walkthrough will be held at Porter Memorial Library, 87 Main Street Blandford, MA, 01008 on March 25th, 2025 at 9:00am.

Request for Services documents are available from the Town of Blandford OPM, Aaron Singer, via email - aaron.singer@skanska.com.

Forward any questions by 2pm April 1st 2025, as instructed in the RFS document to the Town of Blandford OPM, Aaron Singer, via email aaron.singer@skanska.com. As mandated by Massachusetts General Law, c. 7C ss44 the applicant principal designer shall be a Massachusetts registered Architect or Engineer.

Sealed proposals should be delivered to the Porter Memorial Library and will be received un-

til the RFS proposal deadline of **Wednesday, April 9th, 2025 at 2:00pm.**

Late qualifications will be rejected. Proposal submissions should be in an envelope labeled "RFS - Porter Memorial Library Design Services", along with the complete contact information of the proposer. The proposal submission should include six (6) hard copies of the proposal and one (1) thumb drive containing the submission in a PDF.

The Town of Blandford, reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive informalities, and to award contracts in the best interest of the Town.
03/20, 03/27/2025

TOWN OF WILLIAMSBURG Zoning Board of Appeals Haydenville, MA 01039 LEGAL NOTICE

Public Hearings will be held starting at **5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 1, 2025**, in the Williamsburg Town Offices, 141 Main St., Haydenville, MA to consider the

following applications:

5:00 P.M.- The application of David Nehring and Susan Fortgang of 16 Walpole Rd., Assessors Map G, Lots 65.0 and 65.A and Map K, Lot 14 Williamsburg, MA for amendment of the Special Permit granted Nov. 22, 2016, specifically changing hours of operation.

5:30 P.M.- The application of Aruna Goldstein and James Law of 16 Pine St., Assessors Map K, Lot 113.0 to enlarge a pre-existing non-conforming garage on a pre-existing, non-conforming lot as required by Section 12.0e of the Williamsburg Zoning Bylaw.

6:00 P.M.- The application of National Grid on land owned by Jacqueline and Donald Lawton of 39 Goshen Rd., Assessors Map C, Lot 129 to install three wireless panel antennas on existing cellular tower and a new equipment platform within the existing platform.

Kelly Blaser, Chairman
Zoning Board of Appeals
03/13, 03/20/2025



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WESTHAMPTON

Westhampton Public Library announces upcoming April events

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Road, 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.

The library will be closed Monday, April 21 in observance of Patriot's Day. To place a request for curbside pickup, people may email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring programs include: computer classes with Bob Miller second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m., yoga Mondays at 6 p.m. (yoga is drop-in, first come/first served and registration is not required), scrabble group Tuesdays at 2 p.m., book group fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m., walk-in wellness clinics with Westhampton's Public Health Nurse first and third Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m. and coffee and chat

Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

Ongoing programs for children and teens include: CFCE Playgroup Tuesdays at 10 a.m., story time Wednesday at 10:30 a.m., CFCE family yoga classes with Lorrie Saturday, April 5 from 10:30 a.m.- noon (email Jessica at jloud@cco-laborative.org to register), after school fun Thursdays at 3:30 p.m., Lego Club first Thursday, craft club second Thursday, Nintendo Switch happy hour third Thursday and comics club fourth Thursday.

A special Hola Amigos y Amigas/Hello Friends Playgroup will take place on Tuesday, April 29 at 10 a.m. Early childhood is a wonderful time to introduce young children to other cultures and languages. This special event introduces Spanish and Latin American culture to children five and under with music, stories, games and an art activity.

Teen Craft Night meet the third Thursday, April 17 at 6 p.m. This month's craft is a zodiac embroidery. Materials are limited to eight participants and registration is required. Teens should register by emailing Emily at ewayne@cwmar.org. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring all teen crafts.

April/May artist is Valerie McQuillan. An opening reception will take place Thursday, April 3 from 5-7:30 p.m.

As part of the All Hamptons Read there will be a Virtual Author's Talk on Monday, April 14 from 7-8 p.m. For this year's All Hamptons Read event, people will be reading poet Ross Gay's "Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude" as part of the NEA Big Read with the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. Montague Public Libraries is a partner of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

Copies of "Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude" are available to pick up at Westhampton Public Library. Register for a virtual author's talk with Ross Gay on Monday, April 14 at 7 p.m. here: <https://bit.ly/BigRead-RossGay>.

On Thursday, April 10 from 6-8 p.m. and led by local artist Mary Cleary, participants will create a collage on canvas on the theme of "where we live" in conjunction with our All Hamptons Read title "Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude" by poet Ross Gay. Participants will go home with a wall-ready original artwork. Supplies are limited and registration is required. People may call 413-527-5386 or email westhampton@cwmar.org to sign up. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.

On Saturday, April 12 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. spon-

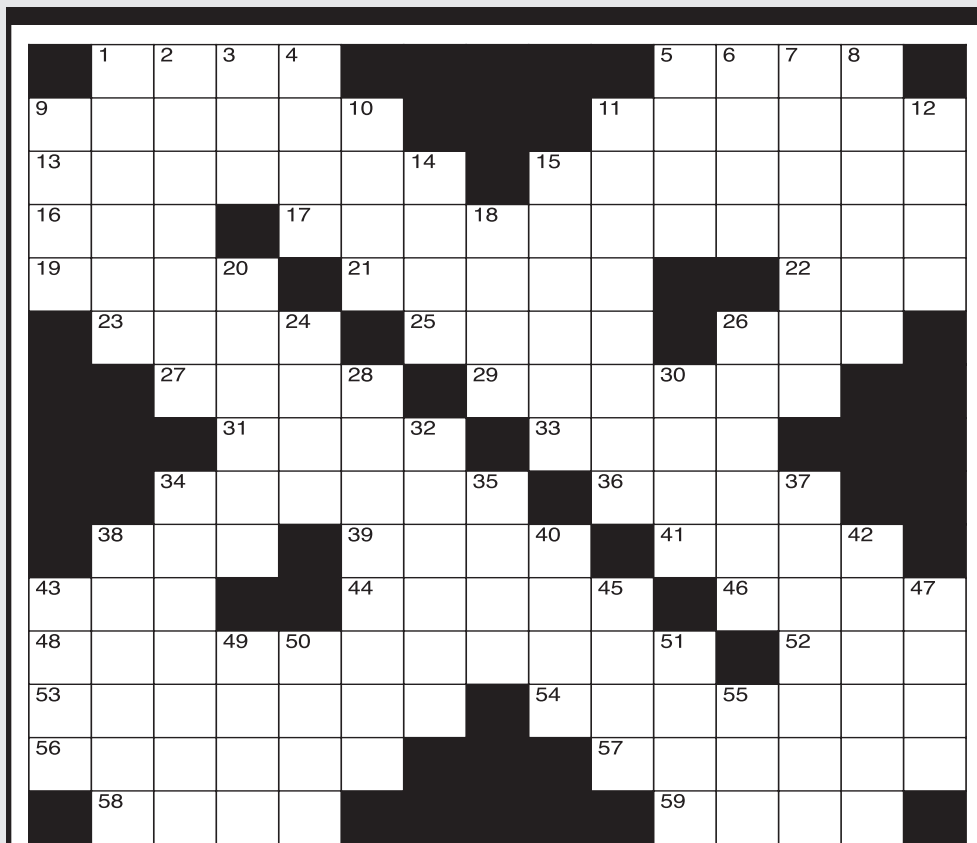
sored by the Westhampton Historic Commission, "The Westhampton Movie," as it's known to some in town, was a film made to showcase the experimental Hampshire County Center. In 1950 a non-profit organization called the Rural Research Institute Inc. piloted their rural community education program "to meet the educational, artistic, and cultural needs of rural communities." The town of Westhampton was chosen as the location of the pilot and the Hampshire County Center was born.

Some of the classes, clinics and clubs held at the center and featured in the film included woodworking, sewing and sewing machine repair, rug braiding, copper enameling, painting, as well as leadership training for adults and teens, a kindergarten, and even a class in parliamentary law. Viewers from Westhampton will see many familiar faces in this movie and get a very special glimpse

into the lives of town residents in the 1950s.

On Saturday, April 19 from 10-11:30 a.m. people may join Tom Lautzenheiser, Senior Conservation Ecologist at Mass Audubon, for a guided walk at Lynes Woods Wildlife Sanctuary in Westhampton. They will explore signs of the site's natural and cultural histories along its 1.4-mile loop trail, a generally gentle route with a few short, steeper sections. The lovely Lyman Brook and surrounding woodlands will be a highlight of the walk. People should call 413-527-5386 or email westhampton@cwmar.org if they plan to attend, so can get a sense of numbers. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.

Dr. Lew Cohen will present "Winter's End: Dementia and Dying Well" on Thursday, May 1 from 6-7:30 p.m.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Take heed
- 5. One's superior
- 9. Prepped meat
- 11. Tighten anew
- 13. Type of textile fiber
- 15. Animalistic
- 16. When you hope to get somewhere
- 17. Offender
- 19. Former NYC mayor Ed
- 21. Type of cryptocurrency
- 22. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
- 23. Herring-like fish
- 25. Popular PBS program
- 26. Congressman (abbr.)
- 27. Flightless Australian birds
- 29. Defrosted

CLUES DOWN

- 31. Prior Yankee sensation Kevin
- 33. Nasal mucus
- 34. Some are southern
- 36. A place to construct
- 38. Popular beer brand
- 39. Shouts of farewell
- 41. Network of nerves
- 43. Make a mistake
- 44. Showed old movie
- 46. Body parts
- 48. A divisor
- 52. Congressional investigatory body
- 53. Papers
- 54. Most unnatural
- 56. Judge the worth of something
- 57. Makes sounds while sleeping
- 58. Which
- 59. Hungarian Violinist

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Pages
- 2. Head pain
- 3. A loud utterance
- 4. Large brown seaweed
- 5. Hulu's chef Carmine
- 6. Greek mountain
- 7. Made final
- 8. Bar
- 9. Tai subgroup
- 10. What you eat
- 11. Teaches again
- 12. Small constellation
- 14. Type of berry
- 15. Cows fattened for meat
- 18. A way to hoof it
- 20. Exaggerated a role
- 24. About two
- 26. Long upholstered seat
- 28. What employees earn
- 30. Fiber from a coconut husk
- 32. Digits
- 34. Polish by rubbing
- 35. Liquid body substances
- 37. Furniture with open shelves
- 38. Edible part of a chicken
- 40. Satisfy
- 42. Tool used to remove
- 43. Icelandic poems
- 45. Swiss village
- 47. Drunks
- 49. Evergreen plant genus
- 50. Light precipitation
- 51. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
- 55. An informal debt instrument

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
Forcing an agenda right now might backfire. It is best to be patient and let things unfold organically. A few new people may come to your aid this week and support you.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
You might need to reconsider what you have been fighting for, Taurus. A current battle could be particularly hard to win, so you will have to rethink your strategy.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
Someone in a position of power might try to convince you that their way is the best approach this week, Gemini. You are determined to stick with what you think is right, but keep an open mind as well.

CANCER

June 22/July 22
Cancer, avoid impulsive decisions right now, particularly those that are financial gambles. Poor or selfish actions can deliver consequences that are hard to reverse.

LEO

July 23/Aug 23
Leo, what you desire could be in direct conflict with what a loved one in your home wants. Instead of trying to force your ideas on them, figure out a way to compromise.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, the universe is calling the shots right now and time is moving at whatever speed is right. It might seem like very slow progress, so you'll need to remain patient.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, this week you might be tempted to put wants before needs. Self-control is needed or you could start spending more than is financially wise right now.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
Scorpio, frustrating exchanges between you and loved ones might leave you retreating to quieter spaces. Any communication is better than no communication, so keep that in mind.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, you can resist a certain situation, but you might need to remain flexible as you do so. Don't fight battles unnecessarily right now. Look for the silver lining if need be.

CAPRICORN

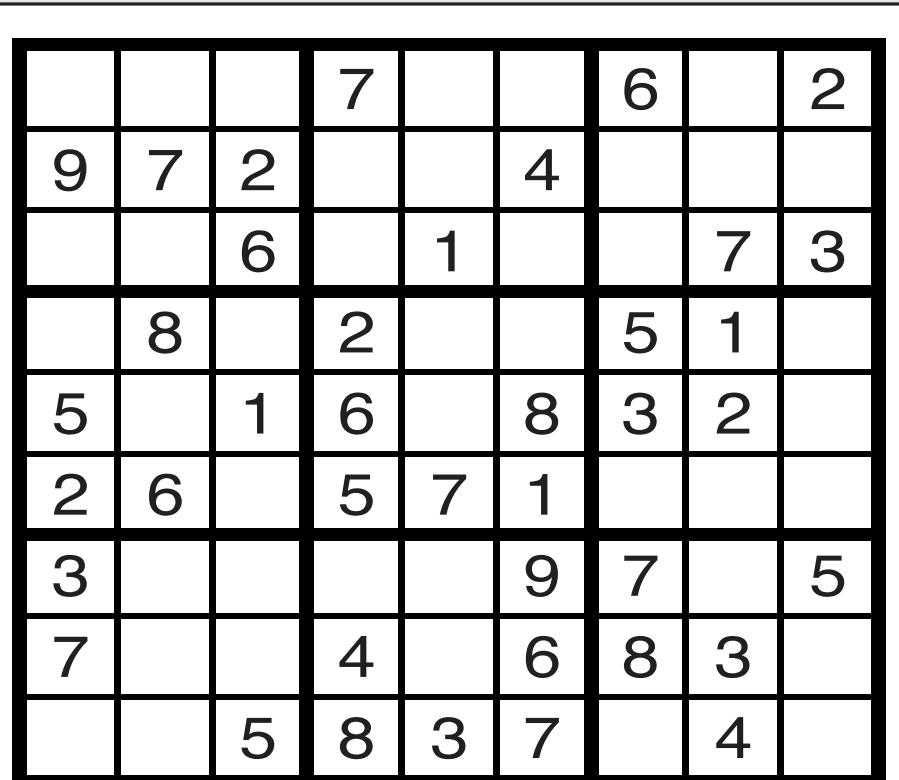
Dec 22/Jan 20
Capricorn, shortcuts can compromise your personal growth. The pathway to greater success is to work hard and put in the hours necessary to reap the most lasting rewards.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, you have more power than ever before, but remember it comes with extra responsibility. Always use your authority wisely and think through decisions thoroughly.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
Pisces, if you hope to make progress, you may have to change tactics. What you have been doing simply isn't working. Start looking at other strategies.



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!

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LOCAL TREE SERVICE looking for climber and ground person.
Must have driver's license in good standing. Call **413-507-1949.**

The Town of Huntington is seeking a full-time **Highway Truck Driver/Equipment Operator/Laborer.** Applicants must possess a Massachusetts Class B CDL with Air Brake Endorsement and possess or be able to obtain 2B or higher & 4G Hoisting Engineer's licenses within 6 months of hire. \$27.50 to \$28.79 per hour based on qualifications. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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NEWLY REMODELED 2 BR., 15 Vigeant St., Ware. Close to center of town, off-street parking, coin-op laundry. \$1250/mo. plus utilities. No pets. **413-323-8707.**

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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Karen, Stephanie and Ed stop for a photo above the Tyringham Valley.



Tom looks out at the third vista on the Cobble trail



The trailhead begins in a spacious old field looking at the Cobble.



A Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers stand on the infamous Rabbit Rock.



Melanie, Stephanie and Tom look out over the Tyringham Village with their canine friends.



Hikers go up and over Tyringham Cobble

Even the parking lot is beautiful.
Submitted photos

Tyringham Cobble on Jerusalem Road an amazingly beautiful geological treasure in the Tyringham Valley just outside of Lee.

Three miles of a main loop goes up and over the Cobble formation passing Rabbit Rock a sandstone

formation with a section of the Appalachian Trail sharing this path making options for hiking more mileage through cow fields to the North and along the fast moving Hop Brook heading South. Originally known as "Cobble Hill," Tyringham Cobble encompasses 206-acres of land and is managed by the Trustees of Reservations. In 2008, a section of the 2,175-mile-long.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail was re-routed over the summit ledges of the cobble. What's somewhat unusual about Tyringham Cobble is that the oldest rocks are found on top-not on the bottom as you would expect. Geologists conjecture that the cobble was dislodged from a nearby hill and flipped over during what can only be described as a violent or cataclysmic event. (Courtesy "Berkshire Destinations Christy Butler.")

It was later researched and found that it is actually a thrust fault, which is a break in the Earth's crust, across which older rocks are pushed above younger

rocks. In the early 19th century Cobble Hill was cleared of the forests to make room for agriculture and pasture land by Shaker settlers.

In the 1930s when Olivia Cutting James and a group of friends purchased parcels on the hill and surrounding pastures to protect it from development in response to a proposed ski area. James' group called themselves "The Cobblers" and they created an informal association of tenants in com her group donated their land in 1963.

Can you name all the Cobbles in Massachusetts? There are only a handful. This place is a must go anytime of the year, even the parking lot is beautiful.



It was 55 degrees as Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers trek through snow.



Cybill and Frankie, trail dogs, want to know why Stephanie is hugging this very large tree on the Appalachian Trail.

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

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(413) 788-2690 (Springfield) or (202) 224-4543 (Washington, D.C.)

Senator Ed Markey (markey.senate.gov)
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Representative Richard Neal (District 1) (neal.house.gov)
(413) 442-0946 (Pittsfield) or (202) 225-5601 (Washington, D.C.)

Representative James McGovern (District 2) (mcgovern.house.gov)
(413) 341-8700 (Northampton) or (202) 225-6101 (Washington, D.C.)

To send an e-mail, go to their websites

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