

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

Highway Dept. presents FY 27 budget requests

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Some agenda items were shifted to future dates and this included consideration of a payment in lieu of taxes for a marijuana cultivator/manufacture on Gibbs Road and the Senior tax work off program.

They will come back with a completed written document for the Select Board. Clerk Cara Letendre read into the minutes a note from Hiram Blair Road resident Patricia Wise.

In the note, she said "I wish to share with you and the Select Board how much my family and I appreciate the prompt, excellent and thorough work on our road by Ray Hultay and his fine crew. In snow they have plowed efficiently and widely enough that an emergency delivery of propane could happen recently. And in fair weather they keep the road in good condition paying attention to hills, erosions, runoff ditches, grading, etc. This has not always been our good fortune. I am unendingly

appreciative of this crew and a road we feel we can rely on. Thanks very much."

Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay detailed his needs for equipment giving a boom mower priority due to safety issues for the crew. Leasing would be an annual cost of \$33,500 with an option to buy, and as of Monday, March 2, the cost for a new machine was \$126,000. He learned from the discussion that if the town were to purchase the equipment, the full amount would have to be set aside in this year's budget. The town's Chapter 90 funds do not permit purchase of a boom mower.

He also brought up the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's Operational Software study last done in 2020 for the town's 44 miles of road. According to Hultay, the road conditions change and he would like to see this report generated again. The cost would be in excess of \$16,000 and come from the highway budget.

REQUESTS, page 6

BLANDFORD



Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

Gateway Teachers' Team for Trivia NIGHT are called The Sauce Bosses, a right saucy group. Shown from left, Margaret Petzold, Bridget Leclair, James Mastorakis, Katy Wojcik, Tim Casey, Liz Casey and Jen Bak.

Trivia Night raises funds for Gateway Education Foundation

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The fifth annual Trivia Night, a fundraiser for the Gateway Education Foundation, was at the Town Hall Saturday, March 21.

GEF President Avery Wing said the fundraiser began in the spring and was originally held at Strathmore Park, but it was soon decided the time of year was too busy. The next year Trivia Night was held at Stanton

Hall in Huntington, "but it was too small" and the event moved to the Town Hall.

Wing said the funds raised are offered three times during the academic year as grants for teachers to apply for things that are not funded through the school system budget. The grant program is Funds for Learning. Some things the grants have been used for include Scholastic Magazine, field trip aids, some technology such as robotics and coding for ele-

mentary school students.

Currently the grant program is helping fund set design and costumes for a production of "Finding Nemo" at Chester Elementary. Last year's production was "Willie Wonka."

Teams participating were costumed and had significant names. The student competitors were Young Money and had glitzy coins and jewelry on their table.

The team with School Committee Chair Jason

Forgue called themselves Not on the Epstein List. The administration team called itself the Dumpster Fire Response Team. Some of the other equally colorful team names included Zero Lucks Given, The Luck of the Irish (competitors all wore green), Helen's Handbaskets, the Misfits, and Nice Rack, whose table sported antlers and horns.

The winning team

TRIVIA NIGHT, page 6

HILLTOWNS

Westfield River Wildwater Race set to take place on April 19

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Westfield River Wildwater Race director Harry Rock announced additional details on this year's race.

Both the expert and classic races will be taking place rain or shine on Saturday, April 18.

This will be the 71st year for the races, which were established in 1954. The Expert Race will kick off at 9:30 a.m. from Knightville Dam and end at the Route 20 pulloff across from the Hilltown Community Health Center in Huntington. The Classic Race will start at 11 a.m. from the Rt. 112 MassDOT maintenance yard in the center of Huntington and end in Woronoco center. There will be classes for solo canoes, tandem canoes, kayaks and Stand Up Paddleboards.

Registration details

Registration for the Westfield River Wildwater Races is now open. To register, people may visit www.westfieldriver.org/



Submitted photo

Expect the unexpected at this year's 71st Annual Westfield Wildwater Race on Saturday, April 18. The last day to register is Wednesday, April 15.

racers. Registration fees are \$45 per person with rates increasing to \$75 per person on Monday, April 13. The last day to register is Wednesday, April 15. A liability waiver must be signed by all participants individually, as each person registers. Race day start times will be given in the chronological order that people register.

Tandem canoes need to designate a team captain,

who will register the team with their team name. The captain will pay for both themselves and their team partner. The team partner then needs to go online, search for their team name and complete their information and liability waiver. They do not have to pay, as their captain will have already paid for both. If the partner is asked to pay, this indicates that they have inadvertently created a sec-

ond registration that they need to delete and search again for their team captain's registration to attach themselves to.

Rock said that some paddlers like to have several boats of family or friends paddling together. For this to work, he suggests they organize a day and time for everyone to register at the same time. "Chances are very good that your start times will

be next to one another, or very close," Rock said, adding that it is very difficult for race officials to change recorded start times once people are registered and asking groups to please plan ahead.

Clinics

There will be two instructional clinics on the Saturdays, April 4 and 11 for racers to learn more about proper paddling clothing, canoe setup, proper paddling technique, self rescues after capsizing, how to correctly run the river and navigate the rapids and how to portage across the two dams. The start time for the clinics is noon at the Classic Race staging area next to the MassDOT maintenance yard (off of Route 112 from the green bridge).

Participants need to set up their shuttle ahead of time by parking at the Classic Race finish line on Woronoco Road by the steel bridge in Woronoco. Check the Westfield River Facebook page for a map

WILDWATER RACE, page 2

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

School Committee adopts FY '27 budget

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

At a special meeting with one agenda item, the Gateway Regional School Committee voted to adopt a budget of \$18,619,761 for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2026.

Next year's budget still results in a 2.44% increase in assessments (collectively) to the towns. Each town's share of the assessment is determined by the number of students they have enrolled at Gateway, at a vocational school or attending another district through school choice. Assessments from the adopted budget will range from a high of \$158,213 for the town of Blandford to a reduction of \$68,133 for the town of Chester.

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HILLTOWNS

MassDOT announces I-90 bridge repairs

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces daytime bridge repairs and tree trimming on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of West Stockbridge, Lee and Blandford.

In West Stockbridge, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 1.3 now through Friday, March 27 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

In Lee, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound at mile marker 8.8 from Monday, March 27,

through Friday, March 27, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

In Blandford, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 26.2 from now through Friday, March 27 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. Drivers traveling through the area should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Dial 511 and select a route to hear real time conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

WILDWATER RACE

from page 1

showing where to park or email questions to races@westfieldriver.org. There is no charge for registered racers. There is a \$10 insurance fee for non-registered people who must also sign an insurance liability waiver.

Safety Plan

A comprehensive safety plan has been established and approved for race participants in both the Expert and Classic Races including coverage with Huntington Police and Fire, Russell Police and Fire, State Police, Westfield Police Cadets, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Hilltown Community Ambulance. There will be a triage nurse stationed at the Classic Race finish line to respond to any medical concerns.

Participants are reminded that this is high risk activity with whitewater rapids and cold water and air conditions. Paddlers assume their own responsibility for knowing their personal physical conditioning, health concerns, wearing proper clothing, experience paddling rapids including swimming rapids and self rescuing their canoe or kayak if they capsize.

Race officials do not

condone, allow or approve the use of alcoholic or mind altering drugs prior to or during either of the two races. Paddlers need to be of sound mind to make proper decisions in case of emergencies and capsizing.

Spectator viewing

Popular viewing spots with parking, porta toilets and trash receptacles include the Expert Race start line at Knightville Dam and the Expert Race finish line at the Rt. 20 pull off across from the Hilltown Community Health Center. The Health Center has graciously offered their parking lot for spectator and racer vehicles. Classic Race viewing spots include the previously mentioned Rt. 20 pull off, the Russell Main Street Bridge with parking on Frog Hollow Road, the Rt. 20 Whipperton pull off, and at Strathmore Park by hiking down to the river.

Please note that Hill and Dale Rapids has no immediate parking space available for spectators as that pull off is for emergency vehicles only. Countryside Woodcraft is a private business and their parking lot is for customers only. Spectators may

park at the Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship parking lot and carefully walk down along Rt. 20 to Turtle Bend and Hill and Dale. Spectators are not allowed at the Classic Race start line or the Classic Race finish line in Woronoco by the steel bridge. There is simply no room for spectator vehicles at those two locations.

Food and Awards

The awards ceremony will take place in Strathmore Park between noon and 4 p.m. with awards being given out around 3 p.m., based on when the last paddlers are off the river. There will be two food trucks on site including the Butcher Block featuring burgers, brisket and pulled pork sandwiches and La Veracruzana, which offers a Mexican menu. DJ Kevin Crane will be providing music and announcements throughout the afternoon.

Everyone is welcome to attend the event. Anyone with questions is invited to email Harry.Rock@ymca.org or hrock.ymca@gmail.com. He can be reached by texting or calling 413-564-9863.

CUMMINGTON

Friday Night Cafe host double billing

CUMMINGTON – Larz Young and John and Shevaun will perform a double bill at the Friday Night cafe on Friday March 27 from 7-9 p.m. in the vestry at the Village Church, located in downtown Cummington.

Larz Young is a veteran singer/songwriter and finger-style guitarist puts his heart on his sleeve playing acoustic folk/blues/alt fusion. John and Shevaun

will perform an eclectic sampling of roots music that will primarily include folk and blues. John Walker and Shevaun Keogh-Walker moved to Cummington six years ago to have more opportunities to become involved in small-town life and to explore their passions in the visual and performing arts.

The event is free, donations are appreciated. Snacks will be provided. People may

bring their own beverage.

Friday Night Cafe receives promotional support from the Cummington Cultural District and is supported in part by grants from the Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale-Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor, and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies, which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

MONTGOMERY

Five Thursday month offers extra concert for music fans

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

MONTGOMERY – Performers for the Music in Montgomery program announced the program for April, which happily is a five Thursday month at the Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road.

This month's lineup includes Barry Searle and Ravenwood, Jerry and Kara Noble, Doug Pi and the Harmonics, Larry Southard and Eva Cappelli and Friends.

Opening this month is Barry Searle and Ravenwood on Thursday, April 2. This eclectic local string band is led by guitarist Barry Searle and features lead singer Sarah Miller, in renditions of original songs and a smattering of styles including jazz, country swing, folk, blues and rock music. The band also includes Don Calsyn on fiddle and John Alphin on mandolin. They perform throughout Western Massachusetts and

as far away as the Rapsallion Pub in Sturbridge.

Jerry and Kara Noble return on Thursday, April 9. Jerry is a pianist, guitarist and composer; wife Kara plays bass. Jerry was the pianist for Smith College's student and faculty ensembles and performances; after retirement, he became the music director at the Episcopal Church of the Atonement in Westfield. Kara is not only an accomplished musician and writer, she has a passion for Icelandic horses. Together, they present music and stories across the decades.

On Thursday, April 16, Doug Pi and the Harmonics will take the stage. This long-time, Western Massachusetts group can include guitar, piano, bass and drums. They are sometimes joined by Eva Cappelli, who is featured later this month. Doug and friends have been seen at the American Legion in Florence, have opened for Johnny Miko and the C-5's in Sunderland,

the Northampton Country Club, Mama Kilsmith's Open Mics and at Fishtails in Hatfield.

Whether performing solo as he recently did at the 100th birthday celebration of Lenny Alexander in Otis or with the group Papa and Friends, Larry Southard's smooth, rich vocals stand out. Papa and Friends includes Lesley Friedman Rosenthal on violin and harmony, who was named this month as one of Musical America Worldwide's Top 30 Professionals of the Year. The band also includes Terry AlaBery (Terrance Hall) on drums, Mike Patoniac (bass and harmonica), and Andy Gordan (pedal steel and banjo) and is frequently seen at the Knox Trail Inn. Southard, who serves as a Selectman in Otis, also puts combinations of musicians together for the weekly Otis Farmer's Market. They will perform on Thursday, April 23.

Batting cleanup in April is singer/songwriter Eva Cappelli, who will perform on April 30. Likened to Bonnie Raitt and K. D. Lang, Cappelli has performed with numerous bands and musicians (including Doug Pi, above) and is likely to be joined by other musicians. She has graced the stages at the Hard Rock Cafe, Iron Horse, Big E and Majestic Theater.

This series is co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and by Gray Catbird Pottery Studio. Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians who perform each week.

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



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Larry Southard performed at the 100th Birthday of Otis resident Lenny Alexander last month.

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CHESTER

Todd Gazda receives permanent principal position

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

CHESTER – Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo announced the appointment of Todd Gazda as Interim Principal for Chester Elementary School has been made permanent.

He served as interim appointment since July 16, 2025; he became permanent principal on Tuesday, Feb. 3. “This district has been a part of my life since 1976. I walked into Gateway High School that year as a six year-old kid, when my dad started as principal there,” he recalled. “We’re talking over 50 years. Over half a century, this has been part of my life.”

This marks his 25th year in education with 21 years as an administrator. Gazda grew up in the town of Middlefield and attended the former Chester Elementary School located on Route 20.

He started his post college work as an attorney before deciding to rethink his career aspirations.

He went back to school to become a teacher and his first job in education was in 2001 as an eighth grade social studies teacher at, what was then, Gateway Regional Middle School.

He also ran the middle school’s after school program from 2001-2005. He moved through the Gateway system over several years, going up to the high school to teach English and social studies before becoming the middle school assistant principal and then principal when Peter Curro retired in 2007. In his fourth year as principal, a principal at Chester Elementary School left mid-year and Gazda agreed to also cover Chester for the remainder of that school year. He said he enjoyed Chester so much, he asked then Superintendent



Submitted photo

Todd Gazda, now principal of Chester Elementary School, is seen running a professional development session on Tuesday, March 17.

David B. Hopson if he could keep covering both schools.

“When I came home and started teaching here for my first 11 years. It felt like home,” he recalled. “I feel a deeper connection to this place than to any other workplace.” Gazda left Gateway

to serve as Superintendent at Ludlow for nine years and spent the last four years as Executive Director at the Collaborative for Educational Services.

But something, he said, was amiss. “I had gotten to the point in my career where

I realized that, 25 years ago I got into this to work with kids,” he said. “Although I impacted a larger number of kids in these roles, I’ve missed out.”

“My ambition now is to provide the absolute best education I can to our 123 students at Chester Elementary School,” he said. Initially, the interim post was announced as a one year term and Gazda said they went through a quick process than he’d anticipated. He isn’t sure what the decision process was; he doesn’t believe they posted the position or interviewed other candidates. Gateway’s administrative team was polled and he was told it was a unanimous decision.

“I was the interim but I never approached it that way. That wasn’t what Chester needed. They needed someone who was committed to the school and could repair relationships,” Gazda said.

“That was my focus for the first 3-4 months. That and getting to know everybody... learning names.”

When asked about his biggest surprise so far he replied, “Biggest surprise? I knew it, but realizing how much I had missed working with kids. When you’re young, you’re all full of fire and ready to take that next step and next job. And now, I’ve been there, done that, proved myself and now I get to be where I want to be.”

Gazda said when he started teaching in 2001 everyone was up in arms about the Internet. Today, it is about artificial intelligence. “I find AI truly exciting. It should supplement what we’re doing, while still focusing on the human element: the kid, the joy, the creativity,” he said.

“I want every kid to go home from school excited to tell their parents about their day.”

BECKET

Becket Arts Center holds Novel Creations Ball, auction

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will hold a Novel Creations Ball and auction on Friday, March 27, from 6-9 p.m.

People may come dressed as their favorite author or literary character and bid on community-member-created works of art created from books and magazines otherwise destined for the recycling pile. Tickets are \$20, which includes food, drink and live music by Razztime. All proceeds go to support free

youth art classes. Snow date is Saturday, March 28. For and more information and tickets, people may visit becketartscenter.org/events/novel-creations-party.

ter and bid on community-member-created works of art created from books and magazines otherwise destined for the recycling pile. Tickets are \$20, which includes food, drink and live music by Razztime. All proceeds go to support free

Hamilton Memorial Library lists upcoming news, events

CHESTER – Story and fun time meets every Thursday at 11a.m. at the Hamilton Memorial Library, 15 Middlefield Road, Suite 7.

This is a great opportunity for little ones to socialize, learn new skills and have some fun. Clutter Buster Talk:

Professional organizer Keely Flynn Schoeny owner of Tidyish will talk on streamlining and creating systems that work for ones life on Saturday, April 11 at 11a.m. Participants should RSVP to the library by calling 413-354-7808.

The Book Club meets the third Wednesday of every month at 4:30 p.m. On Wednesday, April 15, they will be discussing, the historical and biographical fictional tale “By Any Other Name” by Jodi PicThere will be snacks and lively discussion. Extra copies are available at the library.

Clutter Buster Talk: Professional organizer Keely Flynn Schoeny owner of Tidyish will talk on streamlining and creating systems that work for ones life on Saturday, April 11 at 11a.m. Participants should RSVP to the library by calling 413-354-7808.

MIDDLEFIELD

Middlefield Public Library offers craft kits

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Public Library, 188 Skyline Trail, is offering all kinds of craft kits for adults and children.

The library’s take and

make projects are simple, relaxing crafts suited to any skill level. People may stop at the library any time after Wednesday, April 1 and pick one up.

OHC, OPT and library host local author

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

Cormier will share the

history and impact of the various trolley systems within western Massachusetts, followed by a question and answer session. Admission is free but registration is required. Space is limited. To register for this free event, or for more information, people may call 413-269-0109 or stop by the Otis Library. There is no charge

to attend this event but pre-registration is required. Donations are welcome.

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

of mass transit to all citizens. Over time, the trolley system faced many challenges within western Massachusetts. The book highlights the challenge of trolley service in the hill town areas. Eventually, the trolley system ended, impacted by big business, politics and new advancements in transportation.

HAYDENVILLE

Church hosts Easter soup, bake sale

HAYDENVILLE – Haydenville Congregational Church, 143 Main St, Route 9, will host their annual Easter Soup and Bake Sale on Saturday, April 4, before Easter, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the church.

There will be a range of baked goods from the popular hot cross buns to pies,

bread, cookies, quick breads and muffins. Stews, chili, mac-n-cheese and a variety of soups will be available in earth-friendly soup containers to bring home for serving or freezing.

The church will also be selling beautiful tee shirts, handmade aprons, a variety of artwork and books and

paintings by local authors and artists. A portion of the proceeds will go to support Transhealth in Florence.

The church is also inviting the community to services and festivities on Easter Sunday. Worship service will be at 10 a.m. Festive hats and bright clothes are encouraged.

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RUSSELL

Russell Public Library announces upcoming news and events

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

The library will be closed the Saturday, April 4 for Easter weekend. The Russell Public Library Trustees will meet Thursday, April 16 from 3:15- 4:30 p.m.

The library will hold the monthly adult book club on Tuesday, April 7 from 6-8 p.m. The book is "Firekeeper's Daughter" by Angeline Boulley. Books are available at the library. People may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com or call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Saturday, April 4.

The monthly adult book club on Tuesday, May 5 from 6-8 p.m.; the book is "Show, Don't Tell" by Curtis Sittenfeld. Books will be available by mid-April.

People may hike back in time on Saturday, April 4 from 9 a.m.-noon

to "The Forgotten Valley" Knightville Basin with the Russell Library, AMC leaders and local historian Chad Donovan-Hall. As with his library presentation in January, Donovan-Hall will offer narration of the families, homes and points of interests in the former villages of Knightville and Indian Hollow before construction of Knightville Dam. Pack a picnic and plan to continue the history conversation at the scenic picnic area at the base of the dam until 1 p.m.

This out and back five mile hike is on the Knightville Dam Trail, aka. Claud M. Hill Trail, which begins in Huntington just beyond the top of the Knightville Dam. This forested trail is rated as easy and follows the Middle Branch of the Westfield River, a National Wild and Scenic River. The hike will be out and back. There is little elevation gain. All Participants must sign the Appalachian Mountain Club waiver to join the hike. They may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com or come in and



sign up at the library by Wednesday, April 1.

Children will join Miss Dawne for "Making a Soil Factory" or the "World of Rot" on Wednesday, April 8 from 5-6:30 p.m. They will learn about composting and build a mini soil factory from unwanted veggie scraps and worms. There is no fee.,

People may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com or call 413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the library by Friday, April 3.

On Tuesday, April 14 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. adults can explore the exciting world of needle felting. Participants can learn

new skills or practice what they have learned before while making a cute polar bear with fiber artist, Tracy Kochanski. Whether they're new to needle felting or an experienced enthusiast, this fun workshop is for all. All materials will be provided. People may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com

or call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library. This is limited to the first 12 registrants.

Preschoolers will celebrate the Week of the Young Child at the library on Wednesday, April 15 from 5-6 p.m. They will join Miss Dawne for "How does your Garden Grow?" They will explore how plants grow in movement, song, story and craft. This is sponsored in part by Massachusetts CPPI grant funding. There is no fee. People may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Tuesday, April 14.

Parents may bring their children ages 0-4 years for a weekly story time with Maggie Lufkin on Thursdays from 10-11 a.m.

The Russell Public Library's "Library of Things" is now available for folks to borrow. They may come in to see the variety of tools, appliances and leisure items the library has available for check out.

OPINION

GARDEN

from page 4

As flowers start to wither, cut them off – this will keep it looking its best and redirect energy back to the bulb.

Once the soil warms, the Easter lily can be planted outside in full sun and well-drained soil. Sink the bulb with foliage and stem attached, to a depth of three inches and water well.

After the original foliage dies, cut it back to the soil surface. New growth will soon emerge. Lilies benefit from a layer of mulch to keep their roots cool. Although they are quite hardy, do provide some winter protection in the form of straw, evergreen boughs or

the like.

With any luck you will be delighted with big, beautiful white flowers next summer. Although lilies bloom in spring under the controlled conditions of the greenhouse, they bloom naturally during the summer months.

Another good and widely available option for Easter gift giving is a pot of spring bulbs.

With tulips, daffodils and hyacinths to choose from, there will no doubt be a fragrance and flower color that appeals to you. Be sure to choose them in bud, rather than full flower because warm household temperatures will cause them to burst

into bloom in no time.

To maximize indoor bloom time, enjoy in your living space during the day, but move to a basement, spare room or garage each night where temperatures are cooler, but not freezing!

The great thing about forced bulbs is that they can be enjoyed in the house this Easter and next year in the garden.

Daffodils and hyacinth are the most dependable repeat bloomers. Tulips (depending on the type) may bloom great the following season but then take a few years off-time to recharge before blooming again.

If you wish to plant your

bulbs outside, remove spent flowers as they wither and allow the foliage to brown. At this point stop watering and let the bulbs dry out. They can be planted outdoors in spring, or saved until the fall for planting as you normally would.

Sometimes I get the job done in spring, although it does feel odd to be doing it then, simply so I won't forget to plant them in the fall!

Primroses are plentiful at florist shops and nurseries this time of year as well, and they too make great Easter gifts. Even though they are usually sold in small pots, it's hard to miss their brightly colored flowers poking up

through basal foliage.

They come in almost every color of the rainbow.

Many types of primrose make great garden plants; check the label to make sure the one you purchase is hardy before planting it outdoors. I have had a clump of primroses blooming for years now that started out as a potted plant.

An inexpensive but cute gift idea is to insert a pot of primroses into a basket and fill in around it with Easter "grass," this way it can be enjoyed as a centerpiece before it makes its way to the garden.

These days I prefer green paper "grass" pur-

chased at the craft store, or make your own by use of a shredder. It is less problematic for pets.

As you plan for Easter, make these plants part of your celebration, and enjoy them in the garden thereafter!

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.

BIRDS

from page 4

eration" or more likely, the eagle using the vulture's ability to find carrion.

I saw three turkey vultures along Route 122 in Barre near Vernon Avenue on March 16. I saw two turkey vultures in Oakham on St. Patrick's Day. Their return is a sign of spring.

Robins

Huge flock of robins.

Last week, I saw a huge flock of robins, probably close to 100 birds fly over head along Route 32 in Gilbertville. Robins overwinter in this area, but large flocks are returning robins that migrate.

Canada geese

The Canada geese are also returning. I saw quite a few geese in a cornfield in Spencer last week. I also

saw about a dozen or saw fly overhead.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

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.

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Country Journal

News, photo publication policy

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

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

Deadline is Friday at NOON.

**Chester Baptist Church**

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

First Congregational Church of Blandford

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

First Congregational Church of Chester

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

First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

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

Hilltown Community Church

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

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Community Church

**Holy Family Parish**

Rev. Ronald F. 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
pvagliffe@gmail.com
www.pioneervalleyag.org
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

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

BLANDFORD

Planning Board to hold public hearing on by law changes

BLANDFORD – The Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee working with the Planning Board has made recommendations for changes to the town's Zoning Bylaws to give the town potentially greater ability to manage all things solar.

What will happen next is that the Planning Board will have a public hearing on Friday, April 3 at 6 p.m. to present the revised Zoning Bylaws and hear public input. The official notice reads that the purpose "of this hearing to present and discuss

the proposed replacement of the Blandford Zoning Bylaw pertaining to Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic installations."

After the hearing, the Planning Board will present their written report on the bylaws to the Select Board and seek approval for a Special Town Meeting for the town to vote on the bylaws.

The following



Planning Board Chairman Greg Garfield

day Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera will draft the warrant for the STM and seek town counsel's review.

All things in order, the Select Board will sign the warrant at their next meeting and plan a date for the STM, and Ferrera is currently proposing that be Monday, April 27, which will be confirmed by the Select Board.

Gateway FY 27 assessment received

BLANDFORD – The town has received official notification from Gateway Regional School District Treasurer Jennifer Raymond for the town's assessment for the coming fiscal year.

The School Committee approved the budget at their most recent meeting. The amount for Blandford is \$1,786,605 payable in four installments beginning August 15.

REQUEST

from page 1

The entire highway crew came to the board to discuss licensing cost issues. This subject had been discussed before. A two-thirds cost is covered by the town and the remainder is by the employee. The covers \$6,000 and the employee \$3000. There was discussion of following the union contract, which was the only guideline available to the board for highway personnel.

The employees decided not to join the union since the union had no remaining membership after the lone union employee left. The crew could have joined the union according to Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera. Participating were Clayton Lapointe, Mario

Godbout, Michael Carr and Ryan Keach, who spoke for the group.

There was only one contractor, who came to inspect the work needed to be done on Russell Stage Road, LB Corp. out of Lee.

Some of the approved \$200,000 budget for Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee will be used for administrative assistance for the Planning Board, overwhelmed at this time with the bylaw changes.

At the close of business the board conducted a roll call vote to go into executive session to "consider the purchase, exchange, least, or value of real property, and not to reconvene in open session."

TRIVIA NIGHT

from page 1

was the Fogue family and friends, Not on the Epstein List, with 37 points. And this team is a repeat winner.

There was a tie for second place: Nice Rack and Luck of the Irish.

All three winning teams earned bragging rights for

their knowledge.

Christine Bresnahan won the 50/50 raffle and turned it back to the Education Foundation.

Michele Crane, a former School Committee member, was Master of Ceremonies for the program. She

announced the categories and then posed the questions for each.

Wing said she hopes to raise about \$3,000. Each team table and there were 13, who paid an entry fee of \$175. There will be more from the raffle and Education Foundation tees etc.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

Right, he local team Stumped Already are from left, Greg Garfield, Leslie Rosenthal, John Crane, Nathan Crane and Terri Garfield.



Master of Ceremonies Michele Crane introduced categories and read questions.



Crowd of participants attended the Trivia Games on Saturday, March 21 and 13 tables at the Blandford Town Hall.

Blandford Historical Society... Did You Know?



Electa Blair Watson (1819-1909)

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

By the late nineteenth century, Massachusetts had already earned a national reputation for leading the way in public education.

Its 1827 school law required larger towns to provide free public high school instruction, the first mandate of its kind in the nation. Yet that law largely benefited larger towns. In smaller rural communities, formal schooling often extended little beyond the elementary grades and for many children education ended where family labor began.

That was the reality

Miss Electa Blair Watson saw around her growing up in Blandford, a town where learning was valued, but opportunity often stopped early unless families had the means to provide it.

A Woman of Unusual Independence

Born in 1819 and named for her mother, Electa belonged to two of Blandford's established early families, carrying both the Watson and Blair names—families rooted deeply in the town's Scotch-Irish beginnings. Her father died when she was young and although little survives about her early private life, the course of her later years reveals a woman of unusual independence.

Because she never mar-

ried, she retained direct control over inherited property and financial resources at a time when many women's assets passed into the hands of a husband. That independence gave her something rare for her era: the ability to act publicly and purposefully under her own name.

A Gift for 'the More Advanced Scholars'

By the time of her death in 1909 at age eighty-nine, she had quietly accumulated the means to leave a remarkable gift—\$2,000 "for a school for the more advanced scholars," a substantial sum for the period, equal to about \$72,000 today and one carefully directed toward something the town itself could not easily provide.

In simple terms, she understood that a child's future should not depend entirely on whether a family could afford to send them farther. Her gift quietly widened opportunity, helping Blandford students continue learning beyond the point where earlier generations often had no clear path forward. That vision placed her ahead of many of her contemporaries.

A vision that still benefits

When she died, she gave her homestead on Main Street to Blandford physician, Wallace H. Deane. He had the use of it until as long as he lived and then it was to be used to make her property a public park. Upon the doctor's passing in 1920, the

Watson Memorial Park, commonly referred to as Watson Park, was established.

"Miss E. Blair Watson" is buried in Blandford's Old Burying Ground alongside other Watson and Blair family members. In the Blandford Historical Society across the street, a room remains dedicated in her name.

Though she left no children of her own, generations of Blandford students benefited from what she imagined before many others did. Even today, more than a century after her passing, the E. B. Watson Fund continues to support older students, proving once again that Blandford is a small town with a big history.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Du Bois Freedom Center awarded \$250,000 grant through Preserving Black Churches initiative

GREAT BARRINGTON – The Du Bois Freedom Center, 9 Elm Court, was awarded a \$250,000 grant through the Preserving Black Churches initiative of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Supported by Lilly Endowment Inc., the program is part of an \$8.5 million national investment advancing the preserva-

tion of historically Black churches. Founded in the late 1860s, Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church long served as the spiritual and cultural home of Great Barrington's African American community. Today, it is being transformed into a cultural heritage center honoring W.E.B. Du Bois.

This grant supports ongoing restoration, building on over \$500,000 secured since 2020 and advances the site's future as a center for

education, culture and public programming led by the Du Bois Freedom Center.

Part of the Preserving Black Churches initiative, this investment reflects a national commitment to protecting historic Black churches and the communities they serve preserving not only a building, but memory, identity and civic life.

"This grant ensures that Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church will continue to serve as a living site of education, cul-

tural programming and civic engagement," said Dr. John D. Lloyd, Interim Executive Director.

The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, a division of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, seeks to make an important and lasting contribution to the nation's cultural landscape by elevating the stories and places of Black resilience, activism, and achievement. Supported by investments

from the Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Freedom Together Foundation, Lilly Endowment Inc. and other partners, the Action Fund has raised more than \$200 million and supported over 400 preservation projects nationwide.

Preserving Black Churches is a \$60 million initiative of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund designed to uplift and preserve historic Black churches and the com-

munities they serve. Since its launch in 2023, the program has supported congregations nationwide in addressing urgent preservation challenges, safeguarding their spiritual and cultural legacies and strengthening long-term sustainability. Grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 support capital projects, programming and interpretation, endowments, financial sustainability, project planning, and organizational capacity building.

FLORENCE



Local singer Nikki Gorts will perform with Mark Gionfriddo and a five-piece band in "It's The Wildest."

Local musicians to perform April 19

FLORENCE – Well-known local musician, Holyoke resident, and creator of Mount Holyoke College's "The Big Broadcast," Mark Gionfriddo will perform with local singer Nikki Gorts and a five-piece band in "It's The Wildest" featuring the music of Louis Prima and Keely Smith on Sunday April 19 at 3 p.m. in Bombyx.

The premiere performance of "The Wildest" was held at Bombyx in November of 2025 and was met with rave reviews from the audience.

In the 1950s, Prima and Smith turned a tiny Las Vegas lounge into the most swinging after-hours party with a mix of jazz, swing, novelty music, and rock 'n roll. Gionfriddo, Gorts and a five-piece band pay homage to this renowned duo featuring gems from the American Popular Songbook, including "Jump, Jive 'N Wail," "Baby, Won't

You Please Come Home," "Embraceable You," "I Wish You Love" and "That Old Black Magic."

Gionfriddo, a faculty member at Mount Holyoke College, has been creator and producer of "The Big Broadcast," the annual 1940's variety show at the college for the last 20 years. He is also keyboardist and band director for the Young@Heart Chorus, as well as musical director of "Torch Song Tuesdays," the monthly cabaret series at the Majestic Theater in West Springfield.

Gorts is a singer and theatre artist from Easthampton. She's been performing throughout western Massachusetts for 25 years and recently joined the cast of "The Big Broadcast" as a Foley artist.

Tickets are \$15 for students and seniors; \$20 general admission; \$25 for premier seating and are available online at <https://bombyx.ludus.com/select.php>

GRANVILLE

Maple Corner Farm offers breakfast

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

GRANVILLE – Weekend mornings during maple sugaring time it's breakfast time at Ripley's Maple Corner Farm on Beech Hill Road.

Most likely attendees will see a friend or neighbor there, too. A full breakfast is on the menu until 1 p.m. There are pancakes, plain or blueberry, French Toast, bacon, sausage, hash, assorted breakfast sandwiches and all sorts of Maple products.

And the Maple Syrup is served warm. "We keep it heated," said Jessica Ripley, who more often than not is at the counter taking orders. The syrup is Ripley's own.

While the weather has been off and on for tapping, Leon Ripley, senior-most family member of the eight generations on site, said there have been enough good days for gathering sap. "We did 750 gallons of syrup in seven days," he said Saturday morning. Sap flows best



The entire Hamel family was there for breakfast, l-r Richard (Dick) and Jeri, son Thomas (Tom), Kim Kelliher, Jennifer and Justin Hamel.



Above, arriving early, Matt Jones, Chrys Jones and Kelly Paul, all from Blandford. Left, David Ripley ladles pancake batter at the griddle.



with nighttime temperatures below freezing with warmth during the day.

Saturday morning was crowded first thing with a crush at 8 a.m. There were 19 people lined up at 8:03 a.m.

Several were Blandfordites: the Paul's, Jones, the whole Hamel family and more.

The lodge will be open

through Saturday, April 4 for breakfasts.

A free tour of the Sugar House and the Farm Stand just across the street is possible too. Staff will explain the maple sugaring process. No appointment is necessary. The Sugar house has been updated and now the process is technologically accomplished.

PITTSFIELD

Grant program announces awards

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced 47 awards totaling \$5,484,297 to 40 Regional Transit Authorities, municipalities and non-profits through MassDOT's FY26 Community Transit Grant Program operating and mobility management cycle.

These grants will support operating programs and service pilots that provide rides through volunteer driver programs, purchased rides or services operated by the grantee. Funding will also support mobility management initiatives that help residents learn about and navigate available transit options through staff, support, travel training and technology improvements.

This round of operating grants includes funding for a long-distance medical shuttle that helps riders access appointments, services providing rides in rural areas with limited public transit, and funding to provide door-through-door transportation support for people traveling to medical appointments where they will be under anesthesia, and more.

Mobility management

grants will support programs such as travel training services, which teach individuals how to ride transit safely and independently, and mobility managers, who help residents understand and coordinate available transportation options. Funding will also support local collaboration among community organizations working to improve regional mobility.

"The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority is pleased to receive these awards, which will enable us to continue our Beyond ADA grant program. Through this program, we support area Councils on Aging in extending transportation services beyond what we can provide directly. This funding also sustains our Mobility Management program, where staff work with older adults, people with disabilities, and other community members to build the skills and knowledge needed to ride our buses and access transit independently. As one student with a disability who participated in the program shared, I liked the travel training a lot because it showed me how

to be independent in terms of my travel options," said Sandra E. Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Administrator.

The following communities and organizations will receive funding in 2026: Berkshire Regional Transit Authority: Awarded \$11,560 for the "BRTA Travel Training Program" and \$332,142 for "Senior Rural Transportation in Berkshire County;" City of Pittsfield Senior Center: Awarded \$50,000 for "RideForward" and Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Awarded \$364,649 for "Beyond ADA" and \$122,531 for the "Travel Training Program."

This round of Community Transit Grant Program awards is funded using \$4 million from the Education and Transportation Fund through the Fiscal Year 2026 state budget, as well as \$1.48 million in Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 funding. For more information on the FY26 Community Transit Grant Program, people may visit the Community Transit Grant Program website.

BCDA hosts roundtable April 14

PITTSFIELD – The Berkshire County Development Alliance will host an engaging roundtable on stewardship best practices on Tuesday, April 14 from 4:45-6 p.m. at Ventfort Hall, 104 Walker St., Lenox.

This informal session will focus on practical, real-world approaches to donor stewardship. Attendees are invited to bring their favorite tips, tools, and tricks and participate in an open discussion to share resources, strategies and ideas with fellow

development professionals and volunteers from across Berkshire County.

The event is free to attend. Attendees are asked to bring a snack to share

Whether you're a seasoned fundraiser, newer to development work, or simply interested in strengthening relationships with supporters, this roundtable is a chance to learn from peers, exchange ideas, and build community in a relaxed, collegial setting. People should email 413BCDA@gmail.com by

Friday, April 10 to register.

Founded over two decades ago, the Berkshire County Development Alliance is an informal group of 150+ development professionals who represent Berkshire area nonprofit organizations in a fundraising capacity. Members gather up to six times per year to share information and engage in dialogue about advancement issues affecting the industry. There are no fees to join, and the group is open to all interested parties.

NORTHAMPTON

Forbes Library lists events

NORTHAMPTON – Forbes Library, 20 West St., presents toddler story time on Friday, March 27 from 10:30-11 a.m. It is best suited for 1.5-3-year-olds and their caregivers.

The library hosts a Saturday Matinee on March 28 starting at 11 a.m. in the Community Room. The film on March 28, "Cemetery of Splendor," is available to stream for free via Kanopy.

Food and drink are welcome in the Community Room and people should feel free to bring lunch.

History of jazz singing: the voices and the styles will take place Tuesday through the end of April from 5:30-7:30 p.m. This eight-week course examines the history and nuances of jazz singing, outlining key concepts in how vocal expression has been

defined and perceived in jazz, and follow the steps in its development. Featuring the influential voices of Armstrong, Holiday, Waller, Fitzgerald, Eddie Jefferson, Sarah Vaughan and many others less familiar. This series is ed by jazz scholar and educator Ben Young and co-sponsored by Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares, Turn It Up and Northampton Jazz Festival.

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WORTHINGTON

No Kings 3 standout set for March 28

WORTHINGTON – A No Kings 3 standout is scheduled for Saturday March 28 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road in Worthington.

It is sponsored by Indivisible Hilltowns and residents of the surrounding Hilltowns are welcome to attend. All signs and materials should be appropriate for all ages to see.

The activity follows Indivisible national guidelines as follows: Indivisible national philosophy: A core principle behind all events is

a commitment to nonviolent action and no civil disobedience. We expect all participants to seek to de-escalate any potential confrontation with those who disagree with our values, and to act lawfully at these events. Weapons of any kind, including those legally permitted, should not be brought to events.

There will be a Sign Making and Postcarding activity on Friday March 27 from 7-9 p.m. at the Town Hall. More information is available by emailing Indivisiblehilltowns@gmail.com.

Dirt roads have weight limit until May 1

WORTHINGTON – The combination of recent heavy rain, last week's warm temperatures and a deep frost on the roads from a cold winter resulted in some very messy roads.

Lindsay Hill Road is closed to through traffic. The section of upper Lindsay Hill Road, approximately midway and where the town used to not plow, is washed out in several locations and is closed till further notice.

In an effort to try and cut down on damage from heavy vehicles the town is posting all dirt roads this year with a weight limit of 10,000 lbs. All dirt roads in town are being posted

with signage stating that they are closed to vehicles over 10,000 lbs from now to Friday, May 1. Roads include Parish Road, Bashan Hill Road, Lindsay Hill Road, Cold Street, Ridge Road, Starkweather Road, Sam Hill Road, West Street, Dingle Road, Capen Street, Clark Road, Thayer Hill Road, Harvey Road, Indian Oven, Whitt Hill Road, Old Main Road, Guard Road, Prentice Road, Fisk Road, Kinnebrook Road, Adams Road, Scott Road, Curtis Road, Goss Hill Road, Thrasher Hill Road and South Worthington Road.

This does not restrict emergency vehicles, munic-

ipal vehicles, school busses, utility vehicles and local delivery (residents, farms, fuel deliveries and businesses located on the road.) This is a standard practice for towns across the state. If people have a special case, they should check with the Highway Department.

As residents living on these roads know, when the top layer of the dirt roads start to thaw out and moisture gets introduced from melting and precipitation, the water can't drain as well and the top layer turns to soup. That can mean particularly difficult travel for the many folks in town who live on the many miles

of dirt roads. The Highway Department is doing its best to keep on top of the situation, but this time of year there's only so much they can do. They're stocked up on gravel.

Motorists should limit their travel on any of the dirt roads in town if they can. If they're used to taking a shorter route that involves travel on a dirt road and they can avoid it, please take an alternate route even if it's a little bit longer. For those who live on those roads, please try to limit trips if they can. They should think about delaying a delivery for a few weeks until the situation improves.

COA HOLDS ST. PATRICK'S CELEBRATION



The band Rolling Scones provided musical entertainment at the St. Patrick's Day celebration for seniors in Worthington.



Photos by Charley Rose

The Worthington Council on Aging held a St. Patrick's Day celebration on Monday, March 9.



Worthington seniors line up for a traditional St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage meal.



The color green was the décor of the day for the COA sponsored St. Patrick's Day luncheon.

WESTFIELD

'Let's Get Growing' Annual Spring Gardening Workshops available on March 28

By Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

WESTFIELD – The Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association will be holding the 27th Annual "Let's Get Growing!" Spring Gardening Workshops on March 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Westfield Middle School - South.

The festivities will include a marketplace fair, raffles, an Ask a Master Gardener table, refreshments, soil testing and 10 classes to help educate and empower them in gardening this spring.

This year's topics are "Using Trees and Shrubs for Year-long Interest," "Berry Delicious Gardens," "Practical Tips: Growing for a Changing Climate," "Gardening in Small Places," "From One Comes Many: Propagation Workshop (Hands-on)," "Invasive Species 101: Identification & Management," "Vegetables vs. Pests: How to Win!" "Design Your Own Water Feature," "Let's Go Native: A Sustainable, Attainable Approach," and Get your Hands Dirty: Creating a Succulent Garden (Hands-on)."

The hands-on workshops, it should be noted, are already filled.

The speakers include Dan Ziomek, owner of Sugarloaf Gardens, Berry Specialist Laura Griffin McDermott, Plant Magic Garden Owner and Gardening for Hot People



Vendors offer a variety of produce.

Podcast Co-Host Cheryl Rafuse, Master Gardener Chris Ferrero, Wistariahurst Gardens Master Gardener Toi Graham, Environmental Biologist at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Jennifer Forman, Master Gardener Ed Sourdiffe, Full Circle Garden Master Gardeners Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer and Kessa McEwen, horticulturist and landscape designer at Berkshire Botanical Garden.

Anyone interested is encouraged to register quickly, as classes fill up fast. Mail-in registrations have to be postmarked and sent in by March 16 at \$35, online registration is through March 26 for \$35 and walk-ins are the day of at \$40 cash only.

Rosey Bonner, a member of the WMMGA and part

of the Planning Committee for the event, expressed excitement for this year's workshops and said attendees have an opportunity to take two of them during the day.

"The sessions are an hour and 15 minutes long. The speaker usually speaks for an hour and then gives them a good 15 minutes because they usually have lots of questions that may not have come up in what we were talking about," Bonner said.

On the topics, Bonner explained, "our whole mission is sustainability and good practices" and community feedback also guides this, with evaluations at the end of the workshops. A couple of this year's workshops, for example, came to be through those evaluations. "We didn't have any-

thing on trees and shrubs last year, so a lot of people said, 'Can you bring back something else in trees and shrubs?' So, the person we have doing it this year is Dan Ziomek and he's been in the industry for 20 plus years. He's currently the manager of the Sugarloaf Gardens in Sunderland," Bonner said. "He has a wealth of information. He will bring his truck loaded with shrubs and trees and his focus this year is make sure if you're going to use trees and shrubs, it's just like flowers. You just don't have them look good one season, you have them look good four seasons. So, he's really going to talk about what trees or shrubs might be featured for your garden or landscape over the year long. So, it's just good biodiversity, but it

also makes pretty art too."

Another topic Bonner highlighted was "Vegetables versus Pests: How to Win!" as attendees always seek a topic on vegetables.

"They talk about some common vegetables that you grow and pests or diseases that take them over. Number one, how to prevent it and number two, how to manage insects and diseases if you get them. It's practical, useful ideas that really work," Bonner said. "I say they really work because the two presenters, Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer, are both master gardeners, but more important than that, their expertise in this area comes from the fact that they are two of the people that oversee the South Hadley garden called Full Circle Garden. It's a vegetable garden and they raise way over 2,000 pounds of food in the summer for the food pantry there, so not only are they master gardeners, they have such practical, hands-on experience."

Bonner said another concern gardeners have is invasive species in "how to identify it and what to do about it," with the focus on spotted lanternflies, jumping worms, Japanese Knotweed and more.

"The person doing it is very careful to say manage, not completely eradicate, because sometimes, once you get these invasives in here, you can't get rid of them, but you could at least manage them. Others you catch them early enough because

you've identified them early enough you can really get rid of," Bonner said. "She is the point person for Massachusetts that watches over what plants or insects that go on the invasive list, so she's really got her hands into this part."

After Bonner expressed gratitude to the Western Mass community for supporting the event year after year and, also, for this year's raffle, as many community members donated items too, she added that she hopes attendees take away inspiration and ideas to help better understand biodiversity.

"They're an important part in saving our world and making a difference, and it's not mammoth things they have to do. It's small, little changes that they can do. Whether it's adding a little water feature or adding a native or addressing that invasive or adding a bush with berries for the birds, there's something that they're going to walk away with that they truly will make a difference in helping to save our world," Bonner said. "They're taking care of our environment and that's really what we need is everybody doing a little piece."

"If you're looking to get energized, inspired, get out of this humdrum of winter, come to our workshops. We guarantee you'll walk away with a smile and feeling spring is here!" Bonner said.

To learn more and to register, people may visit wmmga.org.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

BUDGET

from page 1

The committee was unable to adopt the budget at their Wednesday, March 11 meeting due to budget cuts proposed to bring a budget forward with a 2.44% increase in town assessments. A level service budget with no new expenses would have risen by 8.4% or \$1.5 million, which would be impossible for the towns.

As a result the budget proposed on March 11 called for cutting two administrators, 3.2 teachers, a school adjustment counselor, and 3 instructional assistants. It would have also reduced the hours for several other positions and had some key staff paid for by grant revenue.

Driving the budget increases for next year are rising health insurance costs, Hampshire County Retirement, contractual obligations and outgoing school choice. Health insurance, in particular, has risen dramatically in the last year with a 20% increase in rates last August and a 12.48% increase for FY '27. According to Business Manager Amy Mason insurance is not expected to rise by that amount for FY '28, causing Montgomery representative Peter Degregorio to ask whether or not a one year adjustment to the amount requested for the Capital Stabilization account might be in order.

Gateway member towns agreed to continue supporting the payments they had been making on the school building project that renovated the high school and middle school and built Littleville and Chester Elementary Schools. Those projects were paid off several years ago, but the towns continued contributing about \$795,000 to a Capital Stabilization Fund to reduce the borrowing on a new roof that will soon be needed at Gateway Regional School.

School Committee members, along with teachers and parents, who attended, balked at the list of

cuts presented at the meeting. Concerns included the loss of the Assistant Pupil Services Director who staff said is needed to support a rising number of new special education teachers who are not yet licensed, cuts to the arts and cutting wood shop among others.

One parent strongly advocated for the school adjustment counselor position at Gateway Regional School. Reluctant to pass that budget, the committee asked Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo and Mason go back to the drawing board and develop several alternative proposals for consideration at a special meeting on Monday March 16. According to School Committee Chairman Jason Forgue, the district was required to submit an adopted budget to the towns by Wednesday, March 18.

Four options were prepared for this follow-up meeting. Option 1 restored many of the eliminated positions-including the Assistant Director of Pupil Services, the GSR school adjustment counselor, 2.5 instructional assistants, the wood shop teacher and music at Chester Elementary School and keep the entire Capital Stabilization deposit at \$794,195.

Option 1 did this by increasing the amount of revenue anticipated in Rural School Aid by \$318,897 (\$16 million statewide). Option 2 restored the assistant director and adjustment counselor only, and reduced Capital Stabilization by \$268,467, while still putting \$525,728 into that account. Option 3 reduced Capital Stabilization by \$303,677 (leaving \$490,518 going into that account) and restored the assistant director, music at Chester Elementary, two instructional assistants and the school adjustment counselor.

Option 4 restored all of the same positions as Option 1 except for a half-time



Turley Publications Photo by Wendy Long

Chester Selectman and Gateway Regional School Committee representative Brian Forgue, from left, Huntington Selectman John McVeigh and Gateway Regional School Committee Chairman Jason Forgue following the special budget vote on March 16.

instructional assistant. It still earmarks \$410,263 to go into the Capital Stabilization fund. In this model, RSA is projected to come in at \$652,419 for Gateway, or \$12 million statewide.

Another change noted by Matarazzo was moving positions out of Rural School Aid and moving non-personnel costs out of the General Fund and into RSA. Matarazzo noted that RSA is a risk, but the risk of not passing the budget in the towns was being weighed against that. "People impact day to day will not be felt if RSA came in short, although it would still be difficult to manage," she said.

Mason pointed out that there is always some variability over what happens in the summer and fall. New grant opportunities and multi-year grants might arise. An additional out-of-district student could enroll and increase the tuition revolving account. "These are all unknowns to us right now," Mason said.

To which Forgue asked

if those factors could also go the other way. "Can there be a grant we were expecting that doesn't get funded? Or a student who chooses not to opt in?" he asked. Matarazzo and Mason both affirmed that possibility.

Several questions from committee members were about how to restore the amount going into the Capital Stabilization Account if the budget takes a favorable turn this summer. Former Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Fisk was on the line and said that grant and RSA funds could not go directly into the Capital Stabilization fund during the upcoming fiscal year. While this will still be explored, it might be possible in a year with good financial news to hold onto a surplus through the year and move money into the excess and deficiency fund. Once certified, money might be able to go from E and D into the Capital Stabilization account.

Matarazzo and Mason recommended Option 1 to

the School Committee, which retained the full amount of \$794,195 going into the Capital Stabilization fund and created funding to restore positions by budgeting RSA at \$16 million statewide and \$971,316 to Gateway. Lisa Goding made a motion to vote for Option 1. A straw poll revealed no interest among the committee for Options 2 and 3. The motion for Option 1 was defeated and a new motion for the Option 4 budget passed unanimously.

In the end, Forgue said that the roof gets more expensive to replace every year that they hold off. "No matter what, we'll have to borrow money. The payment difference could be as low as \$600 a year," Forgue said.

Forgue also said that part of the problem was trying to cram something we could have discussed over eight weeks into two weeks and called for starting the budget process earlier next year.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

COLLEGE NEWS

Paul Davis receives degree from Georgia Tech

ATLANTA, GA – Paul Davis of Worthington earned a Grad Cert in systems engineering and architecture from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

Davis was among approximately 7,200 undergraduate and graduate students to be presented Georgia Tech degrees during the Institute's 269th Commencement exercises Dec. 11 to 13, 2025 at McCamish Pavilion (Ph.D. and Bachelor's and Bobby Dodd Stadium (Master's).

The Georgia Institute of Technology, or Georgia Tech, is one of the top public research universities in the U.S., developing leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition. The institute offers business, computing, design, engineering, liberal arts, and sciences degrees, as well as professional development and K-12 programs for fostering success at every stage of life.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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 Blandford 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 by-law will include Section VIII 8.1 - 8.15.

Section V111 - 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

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 7.422 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, 03/26/2026

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT HAMPDEN, Div. Probate and Family Court HD26E0007PP

To Deborah A. Davignon, Hampden County, Brian J Murphy, Gallatin County (MT), Dennis G. Murphy, Hampden County, Yolanda Murphy, Hampden County, and to all other persons interested.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Paul D. Murphy, of Hampden County, representing that they hold as tenants-in-common in an undivided part or share of land lying in Chester, in the County of Hampden, setting forth that they desire that all of said land may be sold at private sale or public auction for not less than Two Hundred and Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$280,000.00), and praying

that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof after full adjudication of the equitable claims contained in said petition and supplemental memorandum filed with the Court.

If you desire to object thereto, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection in said Court at **Springfield** on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **April 27th, 2026**.

Witness, **Claudine T. Stou-demire**, First Justice of said Court, this 2nd day of March 2026.

Rosemary A. Saccomani, Register
03/26, 04/02, 04/09/2026

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REGION

Gas price surges 24 cents in a week

WEST WOOD — Northeast gasoline prices keep rising as the conflict in the Middle East continues to disrupt global oil markets.

The price of a barrel of Brent crude settled at \$103 when markets closed on Friday, with domestically-produced West Texas Intermediate ending the day at \$98, the highest closing price for both benchmarks since July 2022.

As shipments of oil and gas cargos through the critical Strait of Hormuz remain stalled, markets are increasingly focused on the potential for supply shortages around the world. Measures announced last week by the U.S. and other western countries to address short-term supply woes failed to ease those fears in markets. On Wednesday, the International Energy Agency authorized the release of 400 million barrels of crude from strategic reserves and on Thursday,

the U.S. lifted sanctions on about 20 million barrels of seaborne Russian crude. Oil and refined product prices climbed in response as markets viewed those measures as signs of a longer, extended conflict.

Domestically, refinery activity increased last week as seasonal maintenance wraps up ahead of the summer driving season. According to the Energy Information Administration, U.S. refiners operated at 90.8% of capacity, up from 89.2% the prior week, and produced 9.62 million barrels a day of gasoline, up 500,000 barrels a day from the prior week. Gasoline demand, meanwhile, also rose to a solid 9.2 million barrels a day, an increase of a sizable 949,000 barrels a day, or 11% week over week. That's the highest demand reading since mid-June and a likely sign of fuel retailers stocking up to get ahead of sharp price

increases caused by the war with Iran.

"While lifting sanctions and releasing oil from strategic reserves might address some immediate supply shortages around the globe, many market participants view those moves as signs for concern," said Mark Schieldrop, senior spokesperson for AAA Northeast. "Additionally, while the 400 million barrels released by the IEA might sound like a large number, it represents just 20 days of pre-conflict output from the Strait of Hormuz."

The average gas price in Massachusetts is up 24 cents from last week (\$3.31), averaging \$3.55 per gallon. Today's price is 65 cents higher than a month ago (\$2.90) and 59 cents higher than this day last year (\$2.96). Massachusetts's average gas price is 16 cents lower than the national average.

AAA Northeast's March

16 survey of fuel prices found the current national average up 24 cents from last week (\$3.47), averaging \$3.71 per gallon. Today's national average price is 79 cents higher than a month ago (\$2.92) and 64 cents higher than this day last year (\$3.07).

Today, Kansas and North Dakota have the lowest prices in the nation at \$3.14 and \$3.20, respectively. California and Hawaii hold the highest prices in the nation this week at \$5.52 and \$4.95, respectively. Massachusetts holds the 24th place on the list of highest gas prices in the nation.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.8 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, financial and auto-related services.

RMV offers 250th anniversary license plate lottery

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles announces it is still accepting applications in a special lottery until Friday, April 17 at 5 p.m. for low number license plates celebrating the country's 250th anniversary.

With only a month to go, applicants can learn more about application rules by visiting Mass.Gov/MA250Plate and, while there is no cost to apply for the lottery, there are costs should an applicant be selected during the lottery. Approximately 30,000 Massachusetts residents have entered the lottery so far.

For lottery winners, all specialty plates carry a biennial \$40 special plate fee, along with a registration fee of \$60 if applicable. The initial registration fee may vary depending upon the applicant's current plate expiration date and the expiration date of the winning plate number.

The special low plate

lottery is a partnership between the RMV and the Massachusetts State Lottery Commission. A drawing is planned for Thursday, May 7 and residents will be able to watch the event online via the RMV website.

The "Massachusetts 250 Years of Independence" plate is emblematic red, white, and blue and is now the most popular specialty plate in the Commonwealth with more than 57,000 issued in just over nine months. The plate features a blue background, with the year "1776" surrounded by 13 stars and the phrase "250 Years of Independence" at the bottom. There are 1000 plates available through the lottery, numbered from 1-999 and including the symbolic sequence of 1776.

Customers are encouraged to visit the RMV's website or follow @MassRMV on X, formerly Twitter, for additional details and updates regarding the lottery.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10				
					12						13	14	15	
					17					18				
				20	21			22	23				24	
						26						27		
						29					30			
					31	32					33			
34	35	36	37							38				
						40	41	42						
					44						45	46	47	48
					50					51	52			
			54						55					
		57										59		
						61	62					63		
													65	

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. "Bird of Paradise" constellation
- 5. Red Sox WS winner Bronson
- 11. Whirl
- 12. The State Dept. has a notable one
- 16. Energy, style and enthusiasm
- 17. Part of the mind
- 18. Mountainous country
- 19. Type of beverage
- 24. Atomic #109
- 25. Opposite of falsities
- 26. Female sheep
- 27. Rocky peak
- 28. Sensitive information sharing environment
- 29. Ethnic group of Thailand
- 30. Patron saint of Rome Philip
- 31. Psychedelics
- 33. Japanese pine

- 34. Have an impact on
- 38. Violent disorder
- 39. A French river
- 40. Early Mesoamerican civilization
- 43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
- 44. Musician Clapton
- 45. Ancient Greek sophist
- 49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
- 50. Valley
- 51. A way to unwind
- 53. Atomic #93
- 54. Recommending
- 56. Indigo bush
- 58. Larry and Curly's pal
- 59. Off-Broadway theater award
- 60. Fencers
- 63. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- 64. Relating to songbirds
- 65. A way to assign

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Some are "secret"
- 2. Intestinal openings
- 3. Distant planet
- 4. Assembly possessing high legislative powers
- 5. Genus of typical owls
- 6. One with distinctively colored hair
- 7. Red cross
- 8. An alternative
- 9. Abominable snowmen
- 10. About ear
- 13. The opening letters
- 14. Feeling of regret
- 15. Atomic #39
- 20. Luteinizing hormone
- 21. Atomic #55
- 22. Carries a debt
- 23. Albanian monetary unit
- 27. Semitic abjad letter
- 29. Yes
- 30. Negative
- 31. Earn a perfect score
- 32. Connecticut

- 33. Partner to cheese
- 34. Snack nuts
- 35. Quadruped's body part
- 36. Locate
- 37. Pitching statistic
- 38. "___, myself and I"
- 40. Utah city northwest of Provo
- 41. Football players in the trenches
- 42. One who runs the show
- 44. Wood
- 45. Performing artists
- 46. Slang for a cut
- 47. More breathable
- 48. Most crafty
- 50. Provokes into action
- 51. University of Dayton
- 52. Sodium
- 54. Large fish of the mackerel family
- 55. Not one
- 57. ___ and behold
- 61. Sports highlight show
- 62. "The Great Lakes State"

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

A project you have been working on some time finally reaches a successful conclusion, Arries. Enjoy the benefits that comes from it and take a well-earned bow.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

When you meet a new group of people in the days to come, you might feel a profound sense of belonging. Your heart will be full and you'll be encouraged to socialize.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, your social life may be buzzing right now. It will prove to be a week of laughter, reunions and shared memories if this social energy manifests fully.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

This week you likely will meet a professional or personal milestone that you've been working toward for some time, Capricorn. Celebrate the steady climb you have made.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, sensory delights might fill your week. Good food, music and company are your rewards. Enjoy everything and savor each moment.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, the spotlight may find you this week. Enjoy the praise that is bestowed on you. You have earned it through your consistent effort. Someone with influence may come into your circle.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

A personal mystery that has been bugging you may be solved this week, Scorpio. The truth might bring you freedom and a sense of empowerment. It also will free up your mind.

AQUARIUS

Authenticity is the key to driving more people into your social circle, Aquarius. It also will attract new opportunities. Don't be afraid to be "you."

GEMINI

May 22/June 21

A long-awaited response brings a smile to your face, Gemini. It is just the news you were hoping for, and maybe even better than you expected. Now you can move forward with confidence.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

Clarity about your life's direction brings a sense of calm, Virgo. While you once were floundering, now you know exactly where you are going and the steps necessary to get there.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

You don't have to travel too far from home to satisfy your wanderlust, Sagittarius. A weekend getaway or midweek escape might be all that's needed to bring refreshment.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, this week you will settle a debt of some kind, freeing you up for new opportunities. It will leave you feeling lighter and ready for any new chapters ahead.

			9	5	7		4	
	6					3		
2							5	
			2					8
				3	6	9	2	
6						1		
			8		6			
1							4	
3				2	5			

SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

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

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!

answers

L	H	O	S	E	N	I	O	S	O					
S	E	O	R	N	E	W	S	D	H	O	M	S		
E	I	B	O	W	V	E	T	V	G					
A	R	O	V	D	N	E	W	O	C	D	E	N		
T	I	O	C	N	E	T	G							
S	A	B	A	N	C	I	E	R	V	N	B	W		
					O	E	W	L	O	E	B	I	O	T
W	E	H	A	V	W	T	C	E	F	F	V			
U	S	T	A	W	S	D	I	C	A					
I	R	E	N	K	E	V	S	E	S	I	S			
H	O	T	S	E	M	E	S	H	T	N	B	L		
T	W	C	I	L	O	H	O	C	L	N	O	N		
T	E	B	I	T	E	D	I	N	V	T	E			
A	R	A	V	E	S	E	S	E	R	A	D			

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

Parade marches on rain or shine



The mummers are always a fan favorite. Westfield Colleens Savanna Mazeika and Reese O'Connell smiled brightly and waved despite the dreary weather.

Fairy & Arts Festival promoted their event which will take place Sept. 12 at Nonotuck Park.



Melha Shriners sent in the clowns.



East Hampton Police's Irish eyes were smiling.



The police were keeping an eye on the Grinch.



Even dogs were dressed in green.



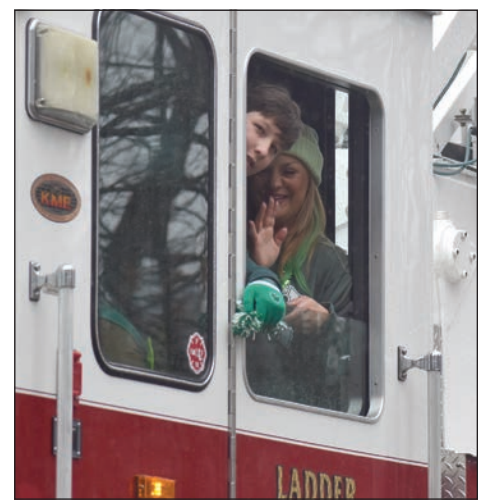
Stiltwalkers reached new heights.



Turley Publications photos by Kara Walsh-Vey



Bands filled the parade route with musical delights.



East Hampton Fire Department brought their trucks for the celebration.



Uncle Sam wants you to get ready for America's 250th anniversary.

St. Patrick made an appearance.