

“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.” – Albert Einstein

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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HILLTOWNS

Community groups celebrate the Week of the Young Child

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

April 6 – 12 marks the Week of the Young Child, an American celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, with a goal of providing “hands-on, collaborative activities encouraging movement and healthy lifestyles through music, food and art.”

Area families, who have young children, are invited to take part in this remarkable week. Locally, the week is being organized as a region-wide collaboration that includes area businesses, family day care providers, the Appalachian Mountain Club at Noble View, Gateway Regional School District, Hilltown Family Center, the Huntington Recreation Committee, Westfield Infant Toddler Services and area town libraries.

While the WOYC has always been cause for celebration and recognition, this year’s collaboration is unprecedented. According to Gateway’s Director of Pupil Services Kurt Garivaltis, it grew out of a partnership that formed last year to apply for a Commonwealth Preschool Partnership

YOUNG CHILD, page 2

Wild New England Weather



These croci were taken in Wyben.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel



Watson Park in Blandford had fallen limbs from a weekend ice storm.

Turley Photo by Mary Kronholm

BLANDFORD

No major incidents during ice storm

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Highway Department Superintendent David Waldron reported that there were “no major incidents” as a result of the weekend ice storm.

There were a few trees or branches on wires and branches down on roadsides. The Journal learned of a tree on the wires on Curtis Hall Road and another tree on Herrick Road that demolished a resident’s mail box, but did not land in the road.

The Gibbs Road culvert work is finished and is working.

Tree cutting

Tree cutting on Gore and North Blandford Roads first set for this week has been rescheduled.

Tree Warden Maark Boomsma attended the meeting and said there were just branches down. There are some down in Watson Park that will need a day to a day and a half’s work in the park and Boomsma will take care of that.

Looking forward, tree work can change after every storm. Boomsma takes care of “dead or dying” trees and suggested that the Highway Department and he work together. Waldron said they both have the same problem, “funding”.

Waldron suggested for next year’s budget a separate line item for \$25,000 for police details and this would “extend the budgets” of both highway and tree warden so they would not have to

ICE STORM, page 6

BLANDFORD

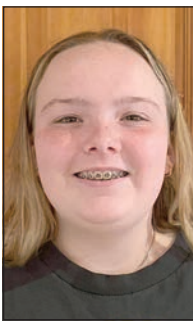
Eighth grader Aubrey Hultay presents class civic project to Select Board

Gateway Regional eighth-grader Aubrey Hultay presented the Select Board with her classroom Action Civics Project: constructing a new exit on I-90 in Blandford.

Civics teacher Christopher Mosher asked all the eight grade civics students to come up with a problem, which exists in the Hilltowns that can be fixed. Of the many issues brought to the group, which included potholes, bring in new businesses, gun regulations, it was the idea of new Blandford exit that

captured the class vote.

Hultay said that State Rep. Smitty Pignatelli spoke to the students and told them it was, in his opinion, a great idea. Hultay said that the cost would not be as high as there is already “an exit there.” Her list of pros and cons included the attraction of more businesses to town, affording the local teens more job opportunities as well as too much



Aubrey Hultay

heavy traffic, noise.

She wants the Select Board to bring it to a vote again and said, “The last vote was very close.”

The Select Board agreed to have a non-binding question on this year’s local election ballot since there is ample time. Questions to be on the local ballot must be made prior to 35 days before the election according to Town Counsel Mark

Reich and Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo.

Reich suggested the board consider asking for a vote at Town Meeting as well. This would be an “informational” vote as “The town cannot authorize an exit on its own,” he said. The question would be asking the Select Board for authorization to pursue the exit.

Chair Cara Letendre said, “Even if we (the Town) vote yes on it, it doesn’t mean it’s going to happen.” Reich said,

AUBREY HULTAY, page 6



PAGE 3

Becket.....	9
Blandford.....	6
Business Directory.....	2
Chester.....	6
Chesterfield.....	11
Classifieds.....	14, 15

Easthampton.....	11
Goshen.....	11
Haydenville.....	11
Hilltowns.....	2
Huntington.....	3
Middlefield.....	6

Montgomery.....	12
Northampton.....	8
Obituary.....	15
Opinion.....	4, 5
Otis.....	7
Pittsfield.....	7

Public Notices.....	13
Russell.....	7
Schools & Youth.....	13
Westhampton.....	13
Williamsburg.....	7
Worthington.....	8

Happy Easter



HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

Hikers find another ‘lost’ quarry

BECKET – The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers found Keefe’s Granite Quarry in Becket State Forest on a recent hike.

It is one of the early quarries of several we have found both in Otis and Becket that have sparsely been written about in the history books. Keefe’s Quarry still in excellent condition has existed lost in the Becket State Forest.

Timothy Keefe purchased the mining rights to this land from the owner James Turner, in 1882. Turner was one of the most proficient granite industry miners here in the southern Hilltowns, a direct descendant of those who originated granite quarrying of the money making vein that crosses both Becket and Otis.

Two pits were quarried and a staging area/workshop was located on the mountain above the Walker Brook valley. The old road is barely recognizable as it connected to the original Mitchel Road and the Chester and Becket Railroad. It appears that the stone was transported out of the quarry by oxen.



Tom Hofman takes a photo of the boulder with numerous drill marks.



Hilltown Hikers explore the lower pit of Keefe Granite Quarry.

Submitted photos



The upper pit of the Keefe Granite Quarry is in Becket State Forest.



Here is another view of the lower pit of Keefe Granite Quarry. A hiker inspects drill marks on a boulder.

REGION

Quilt guild announces spring show

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD – The Pioneer Valley Quilt Guild was formed in 1988, and since then, has been an amazing addition to the community where lovers of quilting can come together.

“The Pioneer Valley Quilt Guild was originally formed in 1988 by six quilters who met at Calico Stitchery. Enthusiasm was so great that in less than six months the space was outgrown, and they moved to the Agawam Baptist Church,” Elaine Conway said.

Since then, the guild has over 60 members, and meets once a month on the first Wednesday, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Elks Lodge #61, 440 Tiffany St.

The guild meets together to learn new quilting techniques from the occasional speaker, or a workshop will happen. At the end, there’s always a show-and-tell for members to talk about their recent projects.

Conway, the secretary and publicity person for the group, is very excited to announce that the guild will be hosting a special “Up, Up and Away” Quilt Show the first weekend of May, on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, May 5 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

The cost of admission is \$10, and groups of 10 or more are eligible for a discount by calling Janet at 413-267-9997.

“The main attraction is going to be the 82 quilts and quilted items on display for people to enjoy and look at. We will have a ballot for people to vote for their favorites, with ribbons given for the winners,” she said.

The show will also feature a beau-

tifully made raffle quilt made by members of the guild, along with tables of quilted items the guild members made to sell. There will also be a basket raffle.

The guild will also include its famous Hot Air Balloon for display. The balloon part is made of quilts the guild has made, and is composed of 24 panels total, 12 on top, 12 on the bottom.

“It’s our pride and joy,” Conway said of the Hot Air Balloon. It was made in 2012, and to this day is a treasured part of the guild and its foundation.

“The main attraction is going to be the 82 quilts and quilted items on display for people to enjoy and look at.”

– Elaine Conway

The show raises funds for the guild to buy supplies for the quilts, as well as providing speakers and workshops to enhance quilting skills for those who attend.

But that’s not all the Pioneer Valley Quilt Guild does.

“We donate to shelters across the Pioneer Valley,” Conway said.

The beautifully made quilts are donated to organizations that help people in need, including the Springfield Rescue Mission.

They also donate quilts and quilted items to veterans organizations, foster children organizations, and before COVID, brought quilts to people recovering from surgeries.

“We want to serve the community and also bring an awareness of quilting to the general public and encourage people who may be interested in quilting to go ahead and do so. We are open to men and women,” she said.

The upcoming April meeting will focus heavily on prep-work for the Quilt Show, and the members will put together the baskets for the raffle and any other finishing touches.

Conway started quilting in 2014 and joined the guild in 2018 at the recommendation of a friend after falling in love with the craft, and the guild itself.

“My favorite part is the camaraderie with the people who are a part of the guild,” Conway said. “I think that there is always something to learn from one another.”

The guild and its members want to open their doors to the community and let them know that anyone with an interest in quilts or quilting is welcome – no requirement for skill level.

“Joining the guild has given me a chance to improve upon my quilting skills, while at the same time making lifelong friendships,” Conway said.

You can join the guild at any time, and the cost for a yearly membership is \$30. A guest can be brought by an existing member for \$5, and it will go toward membership if they choose to join.

“We started with the formation of the guild because of its desire to give back to the community,” Conway said. And it does, in many, many ways.

For more information about the Pioneer Valley Quilt Guild, visit pvquilt.org or follow them on Facebook.



This year’s Quilt Show raffle quilt, made by the Pioneer Valley Quilt Guild, has beautiful shapes and colors.

Submitted Photos



One of the Pioneer Valley Quilt Guild members finished and shared their vibrant animal quilt at this past meeting.