

# 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

## Wildwater Races celebrate 70 years

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

It's time to register for the 70th running of the Westfield River Wildwater Races.

The annual races will take place on Saturday, April 19 with the Expert Race starting at Knightville Dam at 9:30 a.m. A racer meeting will be held there at 9 a.m. for everyone taking part. The Classic Race starts at the MassDOT maintenance yard under the green bridge on Route 112 at 11 a.m. There will be a racer meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Racers can still register online at [www.westfield-driver.org/races](http://www.westfield-driver.org/races). Rates are currently \$45 per person and will increase to \$75 on April 14.

Racers, especially first timers, are invited to take part in the upcoming Canoe Race Clinics, to be held on Saturdays, April 5 and April 12 at 11 a.m. There is no advance sign up and it is free to racers who are already registered. For those who have not signed up to race yet, there will be a \$10 fee and



Experienced and newer canoeists take part in a previous canoe race clinic.

Submitted photo

waiver to sign. Those taking part should come dressed in paddling clothes, have a full set of dry clothes in their cars at the finish line and need to set up transportation back after coming off the river in Woronoco Village.

Clinic participants should meet at the Classic Race start line staging area by the MassDOT maintenance yard in Huntington. The clinic will cover proper clothing, proper boat setup,

basic stroke techniques, how to run the rapids and what to do if you capsize. Experienced paddlers will guide people down the river to learn how to navigate the rapids, where to enter and exit the two portages and how to find the by-pass to the Hill and Dale Rapids.

In other news, details on the series of speakers about the river have changed. First in the speaker series was the Indigenous History of the Westfield

River to learn more about the first people to paddle on the river, which was held Thursday, March 20 at Stanton Hall. On Thursday, March 27, the presentation was on the History of the Strathmore Paper Mills, which will also include the story of Horace Moses. This took place at Stanton Hall in downtown Huntington from 6:30-8 p.m. Presenters were Sue Maxwell and

RACES, page 2

HUNTINGTON

## Police Chief Robert Garriepy to retire

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

At the time of his hiring in the town of Huntington, Police Chief Robert Garriepy held the record, since broken, as the youngest chief in the Commonwealth.

Appointed in February 1994, Garriepy submitted his letter of intended retirement to the Huntington select board at their Wednesday, March 26 meeting. He will leave following over 31 years of service to the town on June 27.

He and Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin have nearly finalized a job description and posting. Named to a search committee for a new Chief are Gateway Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Fisk, owner of Moltenbrey's Market Darryl Fisk, and Finance Committee member Eric Jensen. Also invited to the committee was Joe Simonowicz to represent the US Army Corps of

Engineers, but this may be determined (by the Corps) to be a conflict of interest and the town is awaiting that decision.

This did not come as a surprise to select board members Bill Hathaway, John McVeigh and Chair Roger Booth, as Garriepy had met with the board in executive session on March 12 to discuss his intention and ideas for managing the transition. Those minutes were unanimously voted via roll call to be released to the public at the March 26 meeting.

Hathaway congratulated Garriepy on his retirement and Booth commended him for his service. "I regretfully make a motion to accept the letter of retirement," Booth said, which was unanimously approved.

Garriepy and Peloquin discussed some of the details of the job posting for a new Chief, which included the town covering 75% of health insurance,

CHIEF, page 3

HUNTINGTON

## Block printing, seed swap return in April

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

April's monthly calendar for the Huntington Public Library includes another block printing series for beginners and a community seed swap.

These events will take place in addition to the monthly book clubs, craft-ernoon, and game night. Beginning block printing will take place over three Saturdays, spaced two weeks apart. Nine spots are available and registration is required. Workshops will begin on Saturday April 5, April 19, and May 3 begin at 2 p.m.

Participants will learn basic techniques

for carving and printing your own 4" X 6" images. To register for this free series of workshops, people may visit [Huntingtonpubliclibrary.org](http://Huntingtonpubliclibrary.org), click on events, and scroll down to the listing.

Another returning event is a community seed swap. People with excess seeds are invited to come to the library on Saturday, April 26 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. They will share seeds and knowledge and meet other gardeners. Children and beginners are welcome to attend.

PRINTING, page 2



Erica Wells took part in the first block printing series of workshops at the library last winter.

Submitted photo

BLANDFORD

## Sheriff recruits perform community service

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Members of the 53rd Western Massachusetts County Correctional Officers Academy, all recruits for the Hampden County Sheriff's Department, spent Friday, March 28, in Blandford and Chester.

In Blandford, the recruits focused on beautifying the area around Town Hall, Town Common and Watson Park. In Chester, they cleaned up the playground at 10 Middlefield Road, across from Chester Town Hall and also tackled a cleanup project at Hampden Park on Hampden Street.

Sheriff Nick Cocchi expressed his pride in the recruits, highlighting their dedication and

hard work. "Becoming a correctional officer in Hampden County is never easy and it's always earned. I am incredibly proud of this class for not only the hard work they've put in

during their time in the academy but also for the commitment they've shown to giving back to the community. Their graduation next week will mark the start of their careers as correctional officers and they will continue to make meaningful contributions to Hampden County long after this ceremony," Sheriff

Cocchi said, "This community service project is a perfect example of how the work of correctional officers extends beyond the walls of our facilities. Giving back to the community is part of the job and while graduation is a significant milestone, it is by no means the end of their hard work; it's only the beginning."

The graduation marks the culmination of a rigorous 12-week training program held at Westover Air Reserve Base, where recruits underwent intensive preparation to serve as correction officers. The graduates represent a diverse group, hailing from various cities and towns across the region, as well as from multiple countries.

SERVICE, page 5



Correctionnal Officers Acadmey recruits rake leaves as part of their community service.

Submitted photos



Members of the 53rd Western Massachusetts County Correctional Officers Academy in Blandford ready for spring cleanup work at the Town Hall and Watson Park flanked by Academy instructors Sgt. Gina Walters, left and Cpl. Hector Perez, right.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm



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# HILLTOWNS

## MassDOT announces 1-90 bridge work and tree trimming

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces construction operations on I-90 eastbound and westbound for bridge painting and tree trimming. The work will take place now through Friday, April 4, during the following scheduled hours:

In West Stockbridge

bridge painting work will occur on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 1.3, utilizing lane closures from Monday, March 31 through Friday, April 4, from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day. In Russell tree trimming will be conducted on I-90 eastbound at mile marker 29.4, utiliz-

ing shoulder closures, now through Friday, April 4 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day.

Drivers traveling through these areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. Appropriate signage and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. All scheduled

work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions. Visit [www.mass511.com](http://www.mass511.com) to view live cameras, travel

times, real-time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

## RACES *from page 1*

Karen McTaggart, Co-Chairs of the Russell Historical Committee.

The third in the series-Legends of the Westfield River Canoe Races has been postponed to the fall. The Eras Dance originally scheduled for Saturday, April 12 is cancelled.

# HUNTINGTON

## Playground gets new equipment

HUNTINGTON – Vandalism has occurred again to the playground equipment down at Pettis Field.

The Huntington Recreation Committee replaced multiple pieces to the toddler set in July 2024. Some pieces were due for repair or replacement, then there were some pieces that were missing and others were damaged.

A new toddler swing was replaced as well. Sand was generously donated by Hilltown Sand and Gravel under the swings and around the playground and spread by the Huntington Highway Department. Plans for the picnic tables under the pavilion were scheduled to be sanded down and re-stained by a senior worker this spring.

There have been carvings

and graffiti on the tables and on the posts of the pavilion. Cost of these replacement pieces to the playground set in July 2024 was over \$2,500. Recently one of the newly replaced domes was broken and inserted and sticking out of one of the picnic tables.

There have also been complaints of people not picking up after their dogs in the field and around this area. The Recreation Committee will replace the missing dome soon. People are asked to keep an eye out for anyone abusing the area.



The Huntington Highway Department workers spread the donated sand at Pettis Field playground. Submitted photo



A dome was removed by vandals from this piece of playground.



Hilltown Sand and Gravel donated sand for under the swings and around the playground.



Hilltown Sand and Gravel dump sand at Pettis Field in Huntington.

RH Conwell Elementary School  
in Worthington is accepting

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATIONS

for the 2025-2026 year in the following classrooms:

1 spot in first grade

1 spot in second grade

2 spots in fourth grade

For an application:

Contact: Lisa Ouellet [Louellet@rhconwell.org](mailto:Louellet@rhconwell.org)

## HCHC offers creative movement series

HUNTINGTON – The Hilltown Community Health Center’s Family Playgroups will hold a free multi-week Creative Movement program for children 0-5 and their caregivers during playgroups held from 10-12 on Fridays from 10 a.m.-noon at Stanton Hall.

Laurel Lenski, owner of Intrinsic Movement and a highly experienced dance and expressive arts teacher will facilitate sessions on Fridays, April 4, April 11,

April 25, May 9 and May 23. Parents, who have attended these movement groups before, have praised Laurel’s “fun, intentional way of having children focus on movement.” She has provided movement fun for many area libraries and schools.

The HCHC’S Hilltown Family Center offers free caregiver playgroups weekly on Mondays at Worthington Library from 9:30-11:30 a.m., Wednesdays at the

Chester Train Station from 10 a.m.-noon and on most Fridays 10 a.m.-noon at Stanton Hall in Huntington.

On the third Fridays of the month the playgroups take a field trip. A free home visiting program, ParentChild+, is also available through HCHC Community Programs for children 16 months through 3 years old. For more information on any of these programs, people may call Chris at 413-303-6071.

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## PRINTING *from page 1*

people have questions, they may email [hilltowns.care@gmail.com](mailto:hilltowns.care@gmail.com).

Three different book clubs are on the calendar in April. The Book Swap Club, which meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:30 p.m., will gather on Tuesday, April 8. This club works a little differently: instead of everyone reading the same book, bring a book that they read and loved, to recommend to others.

Then, on Thursday, April 10 the traditional book club meets to discuss “Fresh Water for Flowers” by Valerie Perrin. This book tells the story of Violette Toussant, who marries young and has a child. With her husband’s infidelity, she learns to support herself as a caretaker of a cemetery in a small town in France. Copies can be picked up at the library, while available, ordered via interlibrary loan,] or borrowed for e-readers through Libby.

Finally, the Cookbook Club will meet on Wednesday, April 23 at 5 p.m. This month’s theme is tea party recipes. Choose a cookbook or find an online source, try out recipes, prepare and bring one of those recipes to the meeting for a potluck-style gathering.

The next Book Club

pick is “A Wilder Shore” by Camille Peri. This multi award-winning book presents the epic love story between Robert Lewis Stevenson and his wife, Fanny. Stevenson wrote “Treasure Island,” “Kidnapped” and “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” and this book details the impact Fanny had on his writing. Copies may be picked up at the library, while available, ordered through interlibrary loan, or borrowed through Libby. This book will be discussed at the Thursday, May 22 book club meeting at 4 p.m.

Regular events will be held on the following schedule. Story hours are on Mondays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.; crafternoon is the second Thursday of the month (April 10) at 4 p.m.; bring a project or try out some of the library’s materials. Game Night is the third Thursday (April 17) at 4 p.m. This event is for all ages; patrons can bring their own game to play with others or make use of the games available at the library. Pre-registration is required to take part in free pizza and soda at Game Night. To register, people may visit to [huntingtonpubliclibrary.com](http://huntingtonpubliclibrary.com).

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HUNTINGTON

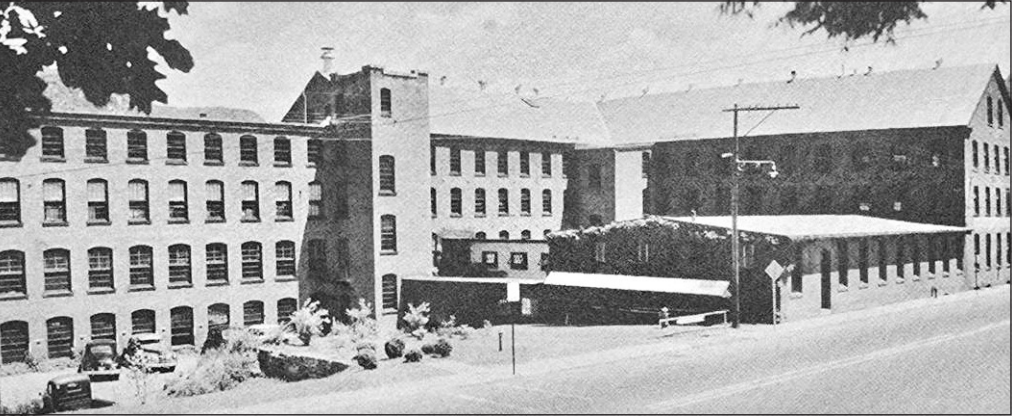
Historical Commission presents mill history program

HUNTINGTON – Woronoco’s Strathmore Paper Company history presentation took place recently at Stanton Hall by Russell Historical Commission co-chairs Karen McTaggart and Sue Maxwell

It was sponsored by the

Westfield River Wildwater Races. This was a grassroots community event with all connected to the mills participating in the discussion, some coming from as far as Vermont and New Hampshire with family ties to the mill community.

Horace A. Moses was paid homage for his unlimited giving to the community. Historians Bruce Cortis and Bob Kidd spoke of fond memories and historical facts. this is Hilltown history that will never be forgotten.



This is an old photo of Woronoco No. 1 mill.

Submitted photos



An attendee looks at a display of photos and information on the Strathmore Paper Company.



Harry Rock speaks at the recent history presentation on the Strathmore Paper Company sponsored by the Westfield River Wildwater Races. Standing next to him are Karen McTaggart and Sue Maxwell, Russell Historical Commission co-chairs.



Sue Maxwell looks on as historian Bob Kidd recounts found memories and historical facts at the Strathmore Paper Company history presentation at Stanton Hall in Huntington.

CHIEF

from page 1



PVPC’s Sarah Maroney led the public hearing on the upcoming Community Development Block Grant.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

vacation being negotiable, and the Chief reporting to the Town Administrator under the direction of the Select Board.

**CDBG grant application**

Also at the March 26 meeting was a public hearing for the Fiscal 2025 Community Development Block Grant application. Sarah Maroney from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission led the hearing, which was attended by several members of the public. Proposed are Phase 2 of the Stanton Avenue project, to include new street and sidewalk surface, traffic signs and line striping (approximate cost \$487,500).

Also proposed is an engineering design for 1500 linear feet of Blandford Hill Road to include water, sewer and drainage improvements (\$100,000) and hiring a consultant to prepare an ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan for the town (\$50,000). The last ADA assessment was conducted 10-12 years ago, and this will be done to improve opportunities for future grant funding to redress need areas. Included in the application’s budget is 10% to the PVPC for infrastructure delivery, such as project management and procurement and \$127,500 to the PVPC for grant administration services to include program and financial management.

This grant application will not exceed \$850,000.

There is no in-kind donation or town match required and awards should be announced in July. Booth asked Maroney if these grants are in jeopardy from the Federal level; Maroney responded that thus far they are receiving all expected federal funds and are submitting CDBG grants in this round. After closing the hearing, the select board unanimously passed two motions authorizing PVPC to submit the \$850,000 grant and authorizing the select board chair to sign all required forms and paperwork for the town. Questions may be directed to Sarah Maroney at PVPC by calling (413) 781-6045 or emailing smaroney@pvpc.org

**FY 26 budget**

In discussing the FY26 town budget, the board revisited the possible increase of Fire Chief Josh Ellinger to a full time position. “I’ve run the numbers and run the numbers. I just can’t make the numbers work, especially with everything going on at the state level and federal level, I just cannot pull the trigger on this right now,” Booth said. “This is not about Josh. This is about How do we afford the position?” Booth cited that things like the still unknown budget for vocational education and the Gateway roof could ultimately leave the town with \$100,000 or less in free cash. He is also worried that the increase in the chief’s salary and benefits, an estimated \$80,000-100,000 hit to the town, is not sustainable. Hathaway concurred that they cannot leave the town short on free cash and that he thinks a 2-½ override is unfair to taxpayers.

But Booth also said he is willing to increase the Fire Chief’s salary based upon job performance. Currently, this salary is at \$23,000 for part-time work. The 2% increase budgeted for most town employees would only yield \$460. McVeigh, himself an Assistant Fire Chief for the Department, spoke up, noting that Ellinger goes to every single call and advocated for a bump to \$40,000. Hathaway disagreed saying

he would support \$26,000. “We’re going to tax the seniors out of living in this town and that can’t happen,” Hathaway said. “It’s not fair to a person who’s lived here all their lives and can no longer afford to live here.” Booth concluded they were not going to solve this issue that night. For planning purposes, they agreed to put the salary number at \$23,460 but indicate a possible increase of \$3,000 to \$17,000 in the side notes and let the voters decide.

**Gateway budget**

In other budget news, the final number for the town’s share of the Gateway School District budget next year is \$3,122,773, which is slightly lower than expected. Peloquin also reported that the town’s free cash had not been certified because two required reports had not been submitted; the town accountant and tax collector are working to complete the submission.

**Assessors**

Peloquin reported that she had an update from the Assessors in response to a meeting last winter regarding two untaxed properties. Assessors have determined that the Timothy Hill property did not submit tax exempt paperwork by the deadline and will be receiving a property tax bill. Booth reminded everyone that they also need to follow up with the sales tax on hotel/room rentals authorized by a recent bylaw change. They are also trying to determine the valuation of the Norwich Hill Congregational Church, which has been sold. It doesn’t qualify as a house because it doesn’t have a shower.

**Open space**

Also, the board approved a letter of support for the town’s Open Space and Recreation Plan with McVeigh abstaining; named McVeigh as a point of contact during evening and weekend events held at Stanton Hall for the time being; approved expanding mowing to cover the fire sta-

tions and reviewed a bid from Limited Budget for renovating the Town Clerk’s office. Peloquin will follow that up with a request for more detail. The board declined to authorize Tighe and Bond to submit a grant toward the Bromley Road culverts due to a very tight timeline and cost to the town of \$5,000.

**Solar**

McVeigh reported that he has met with a solar company that is interested in putting solar arrays on town land. One ideal spot, they said, was the roof of the Gateway complex, which is leaking and will cost a great deal to repair. Company offi-

cials discussed the possibility of paying for the Gateway roof if they could put solar panels on top.

Gateway’s costs and benefits are shared between the six towns of the regional school district. Company representatives want to come in and speak with the select board and present exact figures. Booth said they need to run this by Superintendent Kristen Smidy first, and that she’d need to be a part of this meeting. Peloquin pointed out that the project would have to go through procurement, which cannot be taken on during the budget season and town meeting. Booth proposed giving the repre-

sentatives a half hour at the beginning of the April 23 meeting, if Smidy could be present.

**Other business**

An agenda item regarding the disposal of surplus property was put on hold until a policy can be put into place. Some of the items that need to be disposed will also require letters from the state agencies that funded or donated items verifying that they do not want them returned.

The meeting ended at 8:07 p.m. The next select board meeting will be Wednesday, April 9 at 5 p.m.

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

Propane Truck Driver/Installation Technician

- **George Propane** is seeking to fill a full-time Propane Truck Driver/ Installation Technician position. We offer a competitive wage and benefits package. Preferred qualifications include Class A or B CDL and Propane Gas Installers license. For qualified candidates George Propane will train employee for CDL or Propane Gas Installers License.
- Personal characteristics and company fit are more important than previous experience.
- This position is physically demanding.
- A seasonal, winter (November-March) position is also available.

Responsibilities:

- Drive propane truck and deliver propane as assigned.
- Installation of propane tanks and equipment.
- Service gas appliances.
- Maintenance of propane equipment.
- Participate in “on-call” rotation, which requires weekend and after-hours availability
- Complete paperwork in neat, timely, and accurate manner
- Present a neat and clean appearance, including maintaining cleanliness of company vehicle.
- Willingness to learn new skills and be cross trained
- Other assigned duties.

Requirements:

- A valid driver’s license and clean driving record
- Must be reliable, committed, and accountable
- Possess technical troubleshooting abilities
- Must be able to pass a pre-employment physical (conducted at our occupational health provider’s location)
- Ability to pass required drug and alcohol test.
- Must meet employment eligibility standards set for criminal and other background checks

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EDITORIAL

Memories of a Field Driver

By Ellenor Downer

Recently, the town of Blandford announced vacancies for two Field Drivers and Fence Viewers.

Both positions have been unfilled for several years.

In my mid-thirties, I was a Field Driver in a small town in Central Massachusetts where I live. At the time, the livestock population was larger and the town had several dairy farms as well as backyard farms.

I got to know many of the animals by name. Dispatch would either call me or the other Field Driver if an animal was loose on the road or in a neighbor's yard.

Usually, I knew, where the animal belonged, just by the location reported. Sometimes, animals roam, but that was rare. I always had a bucket of grain, rope halters for cattle, halters and lead rope for horses.

The bucket of grain was not only to lure the wayward horse or cow, but to catch a pig as well. One pig would regularly escape on hot days to cool off in a nearby stream by its home.

I dreaded those calls as I inevitably got almost as wet as the pig. Once out of the water, the task remained of getting the beast back into its enclosure. I always grabbed extra grain for that call. I would leave a note for the owner that the pig got out and to secure their fence better.

Another frequent call was a steer, who escaped almost daily once the grass got low in its pasture. Fortunately, it led well once I got a rope halter on its head. The grain bucket with the halter opened and placed in the grain bucket worked well.



Again, I would leave a note for the owner that the animal got out, to fix the fence and give it some hay to supplement the depleted pasture.

This steer was a too frequent traveler. I went to the Board of Selectmen about the issue as the steer escaped daily and sometimes more. The Board sent the owner a letter. He responded the the steer was going to the be sent to the slaughter house in a week or so.

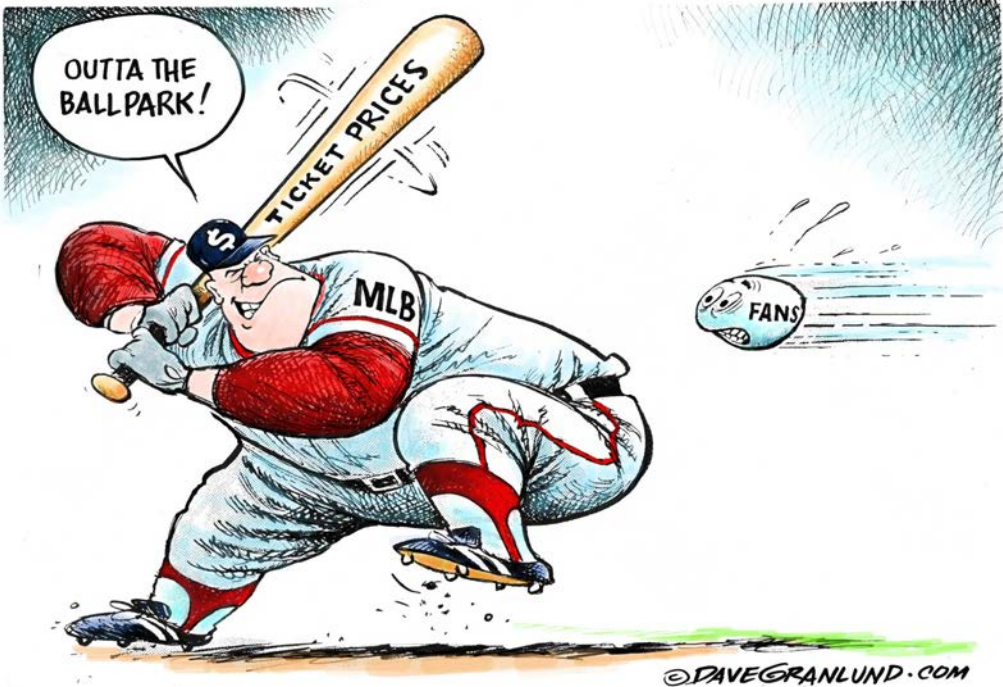
My problem with the steer ended when it went off in the trailer. However, I heard the wayward steer escaped at the slaughterhouse and roamed the area for three or so days before finally getting captured.

In the town where I lived Field Drivers were not on the Annual Town Election ballot like Blandford, but were elected at Town Meeting every year. After six years, I decided it was too time consuming to continue and gave up the position. It seemed I got called more than the other Field Drivers as I was a stay at home mom and readily available especially when school was in session.

I hope this year, Blandford finds candidates for both Field Driver and Fence Viewer. Field Driver is an important position as a wayward animal in the road is a danger to both itself and the motorists, who meet the animal.

The candidates should be young and fit as well as have a working knowledge of animals. Chasing after an animal only makes it run away. They are a lot faster on four legs than the two legged Field Driver. Recently, a bovine got loose in my town. It took four people to "herd" it home. A well-trained Field Driver probably could have done it on his or her own.

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

Can my wife and I get spouse benefits from each other?

Dear Rusty:

My wife and I are currently collecting Social Security.

We both started receiving SS at 62 years old. That said, we get by on a tight budget. A retired friend told us about an option which allows a spouse to collect half of the other spouse's SS monthly income. My question has two parts: Can we both collect on each other's SS? And Are there any pitfalls?

Signed: Seeking an Increase



25% more than you are both currently receiving.

Since you applied for benefits some time ago at about the same age, one way to estimate if one of you may be entitled to an additional amount as a spouse is to evaluate your current monthly amounts. If either of you are getting a benefit which is less than half of the other's amount, it's possible that the one with the lower benefit may be entitled to more as a spouse. And note, only one spouse is eligible for benefits; you cannot both get spouse benefits from each other.

Another way to explore this is for the spouse with the lowest monthly Social Security benefit to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to ask if spouse benefits are available. Noting that contacting SS these days can be a time-consuming process. Another way is for you to provide us (the AMAC Foundation's SS Advisory Service) with both of your current monthly SS benefit

amounts before any deductions and the exact ages when each of you claimed. Using that information, we can do the math to see if either of you might be entitled to more as a spouse.

But, in the end, only the spouse with the lower benefit may be eligible and then, only if their FRA entitlement (not their actual current amount) is less than 50% of the other spouse's FRA entitlement.

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

Germination tests give way to garden experiments

Although the temperatures did not cooperate this past week, I have to say that spring vibes are all around me.

I saw my first blooming crocus, and even some early daffodils. The phoebe bird that makes a nest above our porch door is back, and hanging around, much to my husband's dismay!

My pepper plants are almost in need of transplanting from their seed pack, and the tomato seeds I planted last weekend sprouted in under a week. It is all so exciting! I don't think that I will ever not be amazed at the miracle of it all.

The other day I was going through my seed stash and I found two year old seeds of Loofah Gourd, Mini Popcorn, Mouse Melon and a variety of "climbing" Zucchini all of which I never planted. These purchases were "impulse buys" I guess you'd call it. I bought them but when it came time to actually plant them, I decided that my garden square footage was too precious to waste on frivolity.

But here we are and my frugal nature shines through once more. Since I bought them I might as well try and



plant them; maybe one will end up being a new favorite.

But alas, does one risk planting two year old seed? What if the seeds don't germinate? Partaking in germination testing gave me a chance to get my hands in the soil, (albeit indoors) and the outcome will help me determine how much I should "over-plant" or if that will even be necessary.

Wasting a few seeds now will save time later on.

First up, the Loofah Gourd. I planted four seeds as a trial and three popped up! That means I will be adding this to my garden come springtime.

Grow it like you would any other gourd or squash. It loves fertile soil, heat and a strong support.

When loofahs were

first popular, I was a young adult and still living at home. Growing them was a project for my parents and I.

Before the first frost we harvested the fat, wrinkly looking cucumbers and allowed them to dry before peeling off the rind. What was left was fibrous matter, looking already very much like a scrubby sponge. It was a fun experiment then and it will be reminiscent to repeat it.

Next comes the Mini Colored Popcorn. This was the first to sprout in my germination test pack with five of the six seeds popping up.

I have never had extra space to grow corn, but I thought it would be fun to try these for both decoration and food. I am going to start them ahead of time, indoors in six packs and plant them out around the three week mark.

They will be spaced about a foot apart in rows about two and a half feet

apart. Corn likes fertile soil, so I will amend the soil well with aged compost.

This type of corn will dry right on the plant, until the husks are brown. Then the ears will be harvested, shucked and dried some more. I have seen people remove the kernels first by using a blunt instrument such as the back of a

spoon to start the kernels moving, then it looks somewhat easy to get the rest to push off.

Another fun thing to try, just to say I did it.

If you are growing sweet corn in your garden be sure to time these apart from one another, so that cross pollination won't taint the taste of your sweet corn.

I was really hoping that the climbing zucchini would sprout in my test pack. It took a bit, but they finally did and therefore they will be added to my garden this spring.

This variety, known as "Incredible Escalator" has a vertical habit. Funny enough, there are all sorts of videos online about training zukes to grow upright, but this variety seems particularly suited to upward mobility.

Zucchini are not true "twinning" plants, however, so they will need to be tied to a strong trellis or stake to maintain their vertical

nature. Because the plant is off the ground, there appears to be improved disease resistance, too.

Stay tuned as to whether this zucchini lives up to the hype in terms of productivity and increased vigor.

Last on my list is Mouse Melon. I saw these for the very first time at the Hardwick Fair in 2022, hence my purchase. Also known as Mexican Sour Gherkin, these fruits grow to about the size of a grape, but taste somewhere between a cucumber and a watermelon, growing more sour as they mature.

The seeds were tiny, not what I expected at all and only half of what I planted came up, so I will definitely be sowing double the normal rate. The vine grows long – upwards of 10 feet, so be sure to trellis to make the best use of space.

I know little more than you do about this one, but I can't wait to try it out. Will it remain a curiosity or will Mouse Melon become a regular? Will any of these?

We'll have to wait to find out!

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

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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.



BLANDFORD



FCC to hold Easter service

BLANDFORD – First Congregational Church of Blandford Pastor Ciprian Droma announces Easter Sunday service will be on Sunday, April 20 at 9 a.m. at the Main Street chapel.

Blandford Democrats to elect delegates to State Convention

BLANDFORD - On Saturday, April 12 at 11 a.m. Democrats will convene at the Blandford Town Hall to elect one delegate and one alternate to represent Blandford at the 2025 State Democratic Convention.

Individuals aged 16 and above, who have registered or pre-registered as Democrats by April

12, 2025, may vote and be elected as a delegate or alternate during the caucus.

The committee chair may be an ex-officio member, but will not be included in the total number of delegates/alternates for the caucus.

The 2025 Convention will be in person at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, on Saturday,

Sept.13. This year’s convention will be a Platform Convention, to vote on what the priorities of the party will be for the next four years.

Those interested in getting involved with the Blandford Democratic Committee should contact Chair Lloyd Martin at blandforddems@gmail.com, or call 413-454-3980.

Hydrant flushing takes place next two week

BLANDFORD – Water Department Superintendent Gordon Avery announces this week that the department will be flushing hydrants during the next couple of weeks.

There are two hydrants on North Blandford Road that need to be replaced. According to Avery, there has been a 13-week back-order delay, but he hopes

to have the replacements in this month.

Right now, there are no scheduled repairs to the water system, “and that’s a good thing,” said Avery.

As far as the drought status, the water supply is more than adequate and at times overflowing, according to Avery. There is no new status range from the state just now.



Library to hold tech classes

BLANDFORD – Demystify technology and go home with a free Chromebook computer that attendees will be able to use.

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance for Digital Equity presented 15 Chromebooks to the library in January. They will be given to class attendees to keep when they attend their first class.

Library Director Nicole Daviau announced this week that there will be four tech workshops on Fridays, May 9, 16, 23 and 30 starting at 2 p.m. Classes will

cover Chromebook basics, Cloud Basics, Intro to Google Workspace, and more. There will be an hour of instruction followed by a half-hour of technology help. These classes will take place at the town hall to ensure that they are accessible to all. To reserve a Chromebook and a spot at these classes, people may RSVP by calling the library at 413-848-2853.

The training sessions, by Tech Hub Computer, are especially designed for learning how to use the Chromebooks. If people already have their

own Chromebook, they can attend these classes as well. In addition to these classes the library also has access to NorthStar, an online learning platform to help people learn to use technology at their own pace. To find out more about how to get started with NorthStar, people may stop in the library at anytime during open hours; Monday: from 2-6 p.m..Tuesday from 2-6 p.m.; Wednesday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursday from 2-6 p.m.; Friday from 2-6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

FOG COVERS BLANDFORD SUNDAY



Fog was heavy on Sunday, March 30 in Blandford. This photo was taken in the center of town looking west. The Chapel in on the left and the Post Office at the corner of Russell Stage Road. The street sign on the right is barely visible.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm



Chester Town Administrator Don Humason, center, is shown with the Correctional Academy brigade, who did spring cleanup in Chester Friday.

Courtesy photo by Robert Rizzuto



Recruits head for the Town Hall entrance to get directions for their tasks.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm



Blandford Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera hands a box of pizzas to Correctional Officers Academy Commandant Sgt. Elyssa Anderson to take to the recruits, who worked in Chester and Blandford and gathered in Chester for lunch.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

SERVICE

from page 1

Their ages, backgrounds and life experiences vary widely, but they share a common commitment to public service and making their communities safer.

The training provided at the Academy is both comprehensive and challenging, covering essential areas such as defensive and de-escalation tactics, stress management techniques and professional report writing. A highlight of their final week includes the community service projects happening Friday in Blandford and Chester.

Town Administrator

Cristina Ferrera initiated this service project as she learned of the HCSD Recruit’s Community Service speaking with Robert Rizzuto, Director of Communications for Sheriff Nick Cocchi’s administration. “He informed me that the latest Correctional Officer Academy was scheduled for their Community Service Day and he asked if there were any projects they could assist with in Town,” she said.

According to Rizzuto, they can do anything from painting and cleaning locally-owned build-

ings and facilities to outdoor work like beautifying green areas and upkeep on playgrounds. “He put me in touch with Academy Commandant Sgt. Anderson to coordinate the effort. We didn’t have much time to organize more in-depth projects for them to assist with, however, I hope to in the future,” she said.

The day capped off with a pizza lunch Ferrera organized and made certain the pizzas were transported to Chester, where both the Blandford crew and the Chester crew of recruits ate.

Election letters to the editor welcome

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year’s election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to countryjournal@turley.com.

Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Friday to be considered for the following Thursday’s newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the news-

paper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor’s Council

during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Country Journal.



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REGION

MassDOT Aeronautics holds drone medical delivery tests

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division announces the successful completion of flights by three companies, which conducted drone medical delivery demonstrations transporting packages of up to 10 pounds.

The tests were designed to explore and assess the future use of drones, Uncrewed Aircraft Systems, for small package delivery, especially for home-based healthcare and emergency medical response in the future.

The Medical Delivery Demonstrations occurred between August and October of 2024. Participant's drones carried simulated payloads for at least one mile, one way, demonstrating the future potential to transport small packages.

"This medical delivery demonstration underscores the value of drones for many operational needs," said Transportation Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbitts-Nutt. "Drones have already proven useful in operations, including MBTA track corridor inspections, MassDOT Highway bridge inspections, overhead project evaluations, and other needs. We continue to assess the use of drones for other purposes in the future."

"This demonstration project reflects our commitment to exploring the use of drones to meet critical needs, such as the timely, cost-effective delivery of supplies and devices for health care and emergency management, across the Commonwealth," said MassDOT Aeronautics Acting Administrator Denise Garcia.

MassDOT Aeronautics already uses drones to improve transportation safety including for infrastructure inspection and incident response, supporting MassDOT, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

MassDOT Aeronautics is dedicated to making air transportation safer, cleaner, more efficient and more economically advantageous for the people, communities and businesses of Massachusetts. MassDOT Aeronautics employs the highest standards in safety, engineering and financial management to regulate and promote air transportation in the Commonwealth.

The agency oversees 35 of the State's 38 public-use airports, supports economic development and job growth, reduces aviation's environmental impact and explores the introduction of advanced aviation systems. The Agency's Drone Operations Program aims to facilitate the adoption and use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UA/drones) in the Commonwealth in a manner that is safe, efficient and cost effective.

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.**



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49				50					51	52				
53			54					55						
56		57					58				59			
60						61	62				63			
			64								65			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Narrow piece of wood  
5. African desert  
11. Waxy covering on birds' beaks  
12. Sour  
16. Infrequent  
17. Former AL MVP Vaughn  
18. Policemen wear one  
19. Out of the question  
24. Used to chop  
25. Symptoms  
26. Not moving  
27. Folk singer DiFranco  
28. Comedian Armitzen  
29. Quantitative fact  
30. Incline from vertical  
31. Scottish musician  
33. Rooney and Kate are two  
34. Positioned  
38. A very short time  
39. Tropical American shrubs

40. Yemen capital  
43. Spanish municipality  
44. Medical professionals  
45. Fibrous material  
49. Confined condition (abbr.)  
50. Without covering  
51. "Mad Men" honcho Don  
53. Hockey position  
54. Taste property  
56. Fertile spots in a desert  
58. They precede C  
59. "Requiem for a Dream" actor Jared  
60. Try a criminal case  
63. Liberal rights organization  
64. Spoke  
65. Insect repellent

CLUES DOWN

1. Unshaven facial hair  
2. More thin

3. Show up  
4. Seethed  
5. Ancient Greek city  
6. Poisonous plant  
7. Hello  
8. College sports official  
9. Monetary unit of Russia  
10. Wings  
13. Take too much of a substance  
14. A citizen of Uganda  
15. Most appealing  
20. Atomic #18  
21. Global investment bank (abbr.)  
22. Jewish calendar month  
23. Popular sandwich  
27. Swiss river  
29. Incorrect letters  
30. Popular entree  
31. Foot (Latin)  
32. A driver's license is one form

33. Extinct flightless bird  
34. Appetizer  
35. After battles  
36. It neutralizes alkalis  
37. Beverage container  
38. Partner to "Pa"  
40. Gray American rail  
41. Salt of acetic acid  
42. Canadian province  
44. Dish made with lentils  
45. Narrative poem of popular origin  
46. For each one  
47. Come to terms  
48. Test  
50. More dishonorable  
51. Unit of loudness  
52. The Ocean State  
54. Monetary unit in Mexico  
55. Lying down  
57. Thus  
61. Where LA is located  
62. Western State

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, a burst of energy propels you to move forward. It feels like everything is clicking, and you are full of ideas and brimming with contagious enthusiasm.

CANCER

Jun 23/Jul 22

Cancer, this week you may have a lot of emotional processing going on, particularly regarding relationships or past experiences. Embrace these deeper feelings.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

It is a time for self-expression. You may find yourself pulled toward hobbies or artistic endeavors that enable you to showcase your talents.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, you are focused on your financial well-being this week, but other issues may fall by the wayside. You might have to bring in someone else to keep the balance.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

You are in the mood to get down to business this week, Taurus. It's a great time to focus on your career or finances. Pay attention to all of the little details as you go along.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Your social energy could be off the charts this week, Leo. Others will be drawn to your magnetism and self-confidence. It is a great time to network or collaborate.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

This is a time to dive deep into your home and family life, Scorpio. You want to create a sense of stability at home and address anything that might compromise that. Trust your gut with how to move forward.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Personal goals and ambitions are front and center this week, Aquarius. This could put you in the spotlight and showcase what you want to accomplish to those around you.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

Curiosity takes control this week, Gemini. Opportunities for learning are all around you. You just need to look for them. It may be a new class or a trip that you take with friends.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

Efficiency and productivity are the name of the game right now, Virgo. When it comes to organizing and planning, you will be all about getting things done in a timely manner.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

Communication is the key this week, Sagittarius. Initiating important conversations and speaking directly with others is a great way to clear the air and get to the root of these issues.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, this week invites you to slow down and recharge your batteries as much as possible. You might feel pulled to spend time alone or simply get away for a few days.

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

SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:

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

Fun By The Numbers

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

answers

T	E	E	D		D	E	T	V	R	O				
N	I	O	V		B	U	O	S	O	R	P			
O	L	E	T		B	V		S	E	S				
A	T	I	T	I	V	T	V	T	V	D	W	T		
H	E	d	V	B	D	E	V	B	D	L	T			
L	S	V	B		S	O	O	D	N	I	S	V		
				V	V	N	V	S	S	V	O	O		
L	N	E	W	O	W		D	E	O	V	D	S		
S	V	H	V	W		H	E	d	I	D				
E	O	V	H		L	V	L	S		D	E	B	F	
I	N	V		E	T	D	I	S	H	E	A	E	F	
X	V		E	T	B	V	N	I	D	V	W	I	N	V
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S	U	O	T	N	D	I	O	V		E	B	E	O	
	V	A	V	H	V	S				L	V	A	T	S

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

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PITTSFIELD

1Berkshire receives Regional Economic Development Organization grant

PITTSFIELD – 1Berkshire announces it is the recipient of a \$210,000 Regional Economic Development Organization grant from the Massachusetts Office of Business Development through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development.

This grant will directly support the ongoing capacity of 1Berkshire, allowing it to provide a breadth of free resources, opportunities and support for businesses “from the spark of an idea, to passing the torch.” The annual REDO grant is a competitive program that the 11 legislatively-designated REDO agencies across the Commonwealth are eligible to apply for.

The \$210,000 award-

ed to 1Berkshire this year represents the second-largest award of all eligible awardees. This makes a strong statement about the importance and impact of 1Berkshire’s robust economic development and regional efforts.

Included among the programs and resources made possible by this vital support are:

Providing 150-200 one-on-one business consultations each year that provide tailored support and guidance to entrepreneurs and businesses at every stage in their development.

Ongoing implementation and stewardship of the Berkshire Blueprint 2.0, the region’s 10-year sustained economic development imperative. Including working with all six of the primary economic clusters, addressing housing, workforce, transportation, technology access, and other cross-cutting issues, and further cultivating a strong business and entrepreneurial support ecosystem.

Organizing high-impact site visits that convene local, state, federal, and private-sector partners to address and catalyze around critical projects and opportunities.

Dr. Ben Lamb, 1Berkshire Vice President of Economic Development, notes, “The capacity that the REDO grant provides us will continue to ensure that we can sustain our diverse portfolio of current offerings and resources, and allows us to remain agile and adaptive to the needs of the business community and economic ecosystem of the Berkshires.”

RUSSELL

Tractor trailer watches ire on I-90

RUSSELL – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation reported that I-90 westbound was closed at the Woronoco Bridge, mile marker 36, due to an earlier truck fire on Sunday, March 30,

I-90 westbound traffic was diverted to exit 41 in Westfield where it was directed to follow Route 20 westbound and use exit 10 in Lee to return to I-90 westbound.

In Blandford, Gore Road residents noted heavier than usual traffic on their road, including tractor trailer trucks that were undoubtedly following their GPS to get to Lee.

No further information was available.

EASTHAMPTON

Elusie Gallery supports fundraiser

EASTHAMPTON – Jean-Pierre Pasche, owner and curator of the Elusie Gallery, which is part of Big Red Frame in Easthampton’s Old Town Hall, decided to do something to show his and his business’s values and beliefs.

It is Mary Ann Kelly, one of the exhibitors of this 2025 line up, who suggested Tapestry, the local non-profit organization that provides “community-based health care, education and support services.” “I have been a supporter of Tapestry for several decades, from the time of the Aids Crisis,” says Kelly. “I support them to this day because of the diversity of critical services they provide and the diversity of the clientele they serve.”

This organization is indeed the right fit for Pasche’s own beliefs and commitment to supporting local organizations. He will donate proceeds from the art sales of all 2025 exhibits, including the current exhibit by Ruth Kjaer, Danae and the Golden Rain, which ended Saturday March 29. A donation box will be available at the gallery for people wanting to support Tapestry without purchasing artwork.

Mary Ann Kelly will follow Kjaer, with Quiet Joy, an exhibit showcasing her original paintings, drawings and sculptural art. The exhibit opens Saturday, April 5 with the Artist Reception between 4pm and 7 p.m., which is part of the monthly Easthampton Artwalk, and runs through April 26, with a second reception planned for Thursday April 24 from 5-7 p.m.

dren in meaningful skill building. Her programs are generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Community Drop-in is Saturday, April 12 between 10 a.m.-noon. This is an opportunity to be around others for some conversation or just to get out of the house. Light refreshments will be served. People may bring along their knitting, coloring book or other activity to enjoy while chatting with friends.

Book Club meets every third Wednesday of the month (April 16) at 4:30 p.m. This month they will enjoy light refreshments while discussing the historical fiction novel, “The Postmistress”, by Sarah Blake. This is a tale of lost innocence in a world where war and ordinary life co-exist and the difficulties that arise during it. Extra copies are available.

A Falconer’s Journey in Mongolia special slideshow will be presented by Massachusetts falconer Erin Shanley as she shares her experiences living, hunting with Golden Eagles and riding horseback through remote, breathtaking landscapes with the nomadic Mongolian Eagle Hunters. This program is Saturday April 26 at 11 a.m. at Chester Town Hall. People should RSVP by calling 413-354-7808. This program is generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

OTIS

Easter egg hunt happens April 13

OTIS – An Easter egg hunt will take place on Sunday, April 13 at 10 a.m. at Otis Town Hall, 1 North Main Road.

The event is free for all ages. Participants should bring a basket to collect their eggs. They should wear appropriate clothing and/or boots.



HAYDENVILLE

Concert benefits Transhealth program

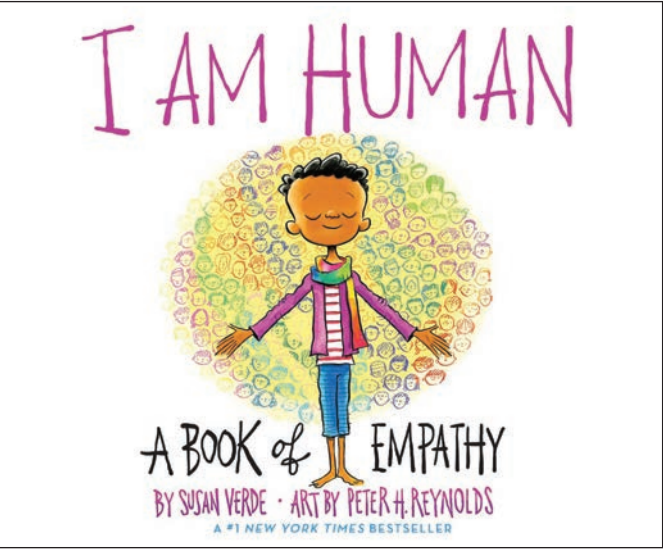
HAYDENVILLE – A benefit concert for the non-profit organization Transhealth will take place Saturday, April 5 at 6 p.m. at Haydenville Congregational Church, 143 Main St., Route 9.

Transhealth is based in Florence and provides medical care for trans people. It is the only independent, non-profit healthcare organization in the United States devoted solely to serving the trans and gender-diverse community.

Mare Berger, Haydenville Church music director, said the concert is planned as support for the program and the people it serves. There will be many sing-along songs.

Berger said she will be performing along with The Queer Joy Collaborative Choir, Addie Kogan, the band Ballad Box and other queer bands. There is a suggested donation of \$10 - \$25, but Berger said no one will be turned away. People may email Mare Berger at mariel.berger@gmail.com for more information.

Library story walk features ‘I Am Human’



Otis – The Otis Library story walk will be “I Am Human” by Susan Verde and art by Peter H. Reynolds will be displayed from Tuesday, April 15 to May.

The story walk is located behind St. Mary’s of the Lake, 48 North Main St., Otis.

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CHESTERFIELD

Library to hold Arbor Day event

CHESTERFIELD – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., will hold an Arbor Day celebration on Saturday, April 26 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Local arborist from Hilltown Tree and Garden will be replanting a pin oak to replace a maple that was removed by the town. All are welcome to be part of this environmental responsibility and stewardship event.

CHESTER

Hamilton Memorial Library list events

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., holds story and fun time every Thursday at 11 a.m.

This is a great opportunity to foster a love of reading in young patrons while providing an opportunity for socialization and learning new skills through crafts and play. Week of the Young Child is April 6-12. April school vacation is April 20-26.

Laurel Lenski is back and will be at the regular story and fun time on Thursday April 10 at 11 a.m. and on Tuesday April 22 at 2 p.m. Her joyful energy is contagious and always gets the fun going through creative play, perfect for engaging children in meaningful skill building. Her programs are generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Community Drop-in is Saturday, April 12 between 10 a.m.-noon. This is an opportunity to be around others for some conversation or just to get out of the house. Light refreshments will be served. People may bring along their knitting, coloring book or other activity to enjoy while chatting with friends.

Book Club meets every third Wednesday of the month (April 16) at 4:30 p.m. This month they will enjoy light refreshments while discussing the historical fiction novel, “The Postmistress”, by Sarah Blake. This is a tale of lost innocence in a world where war and ordinary life co-exist and the difficulties that arise during it. Extra copies are available.

A Falconer’s Journey in Mongolia special slideshow will be presented by Massachusetts falconer Erin Shanley as she shares her experiences living, hunting with Golden Eagles and riding horseback through remote, breathtaking landscapes with the nomadic Mongolian Eagle Hunters. This program is Saturday April 26 at 11 a.m. at Chester Town Hall. People should RSVP by calling 413-354-7808. This program is generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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# SCHOOLS & YOUTH

## Northampton students win prize StudentCam competition

Jane Harrison-Millman and Shira Sweet, students at Northampton High School, in Northampton, are 2025 honorable mention prize winners in C-SPAN's 21st annual StudentCam competition and will receive \$250 for the video, "Behind the Screen: The Price of Digital Childhood."

C-SPAN also recognizes Jeromie Whalen, an educator at the school, who served as an adviser in the StudentCam competition. C-SPAN, in cooperation with its cable and satellite television partners, asked middle and high school students to address

the theme, "Your Message to the President: What issue is most important to you or your community?"

Now in its 21st year, this project-based learning experience asked students to explore and analyze matters of personal, local or national importance. In response, C-SPAN received over 1,700 entries and nearly 3,500 students participated from 42 states and Washington, D.C. The most popular topics addressed were: climate, environment and land use (11%); K-12 education policies and the cost of college (10%); health care and mental

health (10%); gun violence, school safety and firearm policies (9%) and inflation, taxes, government spending and the economy (9%).

"Congratulations to all of the incredibly talented young students who won awards in this year's competition! Through in-depth research and interviews with an array of topical and technical experts, you have crafted impactful short stories that capture issues of wide public interest and importance," said C-SPAN's Director of Education Relations Craig McAndrew. "Your documentaries set a very high bar for

future StudentCam filmmakers, and you should be proud knowing your work will inspire your peers and foster thoughtful consideration from all audiences. We can't wait to see what you do next!"

C-SPAN is funded by America's cable and satellite television companies as a commercial free public service. In Northampton, C-SPAN is available through Comcast, the local partner in StudentCam.

In addition to the grand prize and first-prize winners, C-SPAN is awarding 16 second prizes, 32 third prizes and 97 honorable mention

prizes. These winning videos will receive cash awards of \$1,500, \$750 and \$250, respectively. The StudentCam competition has awarded over \$1.6 million in prizes since 2004.

High school students competed on a regional level, with the United States divided into three regions: East, Central and West. Middle school students were judged on a national basis. The grand-prize winner was selected nationally among all regions and grade levels.

The 150 winning videos can be viewed at studentcam.org and may be used in

a broadcast with attribution to C-SPAN. To schedule an interview with one or more of the winning students, please contact Pam McGorry at pmcgorry@c-span.org.

The annual StudentCam competition is funded by the C-SPAN Education Foundation. Videos were evaluated by a panel of educators and C-SPAN representatives based on the thoughtful examination of the competition's theme, quality of expression, inclusion of varying sides of the documentary's topic, and effective incorporation of C-SPAN programming.

## Rachel Gelina elected into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

BATON ROUGE, LA – Rachel Gelina of Westfield was recently elected to membership into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate

honor society, at Westfield State University.

Gelina is among approximately 20,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year.

Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10% of seniors and 7.5% of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent

of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty, professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was

founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines.

Today, the Society has chapters on more than 300 campuses in the United States, its territories and the Philippines. Its mission is to "cultivate a community that celebrates and advances the love of learning.

## Charlotte Lussier participates in large-scale research project

LOUDONVILLE, NY – Charlotte Lussier, an environmental studies major from Westfield, worked with professor Mary Beth Kolozsvary, Ph.D., on the project titled, "Analysis of Large-Scale Insect Declines."

In recent decades, insect abundance has declined in many areas, but determining the extent and causes requires additional sampling. Charlotte conducting standardized insect sampling on the Siena campus, a site sampled in 2023 and two additional sites to contribute to the overall, continental scale collabora-

tive research project. The two additional sites were located in the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, one of the last and largest remaining inland pine barrens worldwide, a globally rare ecosystem that is dependent on intermittent disturbance such as fires. The APBP is a critical habitat for a unique suite of inland pine barrens-dependent species and it is of great interest to know whether insect decline patterns at the APBP differ from other local ecosystems.

"As a student researcher, I gained valuable field experience and contributed

meaningful data to a larger study. This hands-on project deepened my appreciation for insects and their critical role in ecosystem health. I also appreciated the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Kolozsvary on this project and the one-on-one learning environment benefited me greatly in understanding new and foreign concepts. Experiencing what it's like to be a student researcher has had a significant impact on my desire to pursue more research opportunities in the future after graduation," said Lussier.

## Worthington Historical Society sponsors essay contest

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Historical Society announces it is sponsoring two essay writing competitions to commemorate General Lafayette's 1825 visit to Worthington.

One competition will be for middle school students; the other will be for high school students. Within each of the competitions, the middle school and the high school competition, a first prize of \$150 and a second prize of \$75 will be awarded. The contest is open to students of Hampshire County in public schools, private schools and students homeschooled. Deadline to submit is Sunday, June 1.

Fifty years after first arriving to serve with the Continental Army, General Lafayette stopped overnight in Worthington while on his 1825 goodwill visit to all twenty-four states. As the "Nation's Guest" the General was welcomed with affection and gratitude and his tour was of immense importance to the young United States. His visit highlighted the achievements of the Revolution and provided a contemporary window into the country's progress.

This contest is part of Worthington's Marquis de Lafayette's 200th Anniversary Celebration. The WHS, in coordination

with the American Friends of Lafayette, will celebrate with a variety of programs to commemorate this historic visit emphasizing Lafayette's role in shaping American values and aspirations. The celebration will culminate with a Grand Ball and Worthington Founders Day observances.

Winners of the Lafayette Essay contest will be announced at the Grand Ball on June 13. For complete rules, people may visit worthingtonhistoricalsociety.org. The essay contest is underwritten by WHS members, Kathrine Ewald, Evan Johnson, James Downey and Kevin O'Conner.

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# NORTHAMPTON

## Highland Valley Elder Services announces grant opportunities

NORTHAMPTON – Highland Valley Elder Services released its Fiscal Year (FY) 2026- FY2027 Title III Request for Proposals and is seeking interested bidders.

They are currently seeking proposals to support elders and family caregivers by offering resources and supportive services. The goal is to support proposals that demonstrate community partnerships and collaborations with the result of providing collaborative services.

Applicants can be individuals, Councils on Aging, local governments, civic groups, schools, libraries, human service agencies, faith-based groups, arts organizations, groups of residents in public and private housing, tenant associations, businesses and any other civically engaged entities with whom we can partner to expand the region’s capacity to support citizens of all ages, and particularly seniors and family caregivers.

Applications are due on Thursday, May 15 by 5 p.m. Information session will be held virtually Tuesday, April 22 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. The public is welcome to attend. To attend a session, RSVP to Bernard LaFlam, Data Specialist at [blafam@highlandvalley.org](mailto:blafam@highlandvalley.org) or 413-586-2000, extension 127. A link to the virtual meeting will be sent once RSVP is submitted.

Highland Valley Elder Services has identified five areas of heightened priority for grant funding. These areas are below as follows: In-home Supports to Maintain Independence, Transportation Access and Availability, Access to Healthcare such as locating affordable health care, insurance a prescriptions) Family Caregiver Services, Service to Reduce Isolation, Services to Promote Evidence-Based Trainings and Services to support low-income seniors, at-risk populations, and/or seniors residing in rural communities

Grant applications that seek to address one or more of these priority areas and demonstrate community partnership will receive additional consideration.

Those interested in applying may visit <https://highlandvalley.org/rfp/> to complete an application or call 413-586-2000, 320 Riverside Drive, Suite B, Florence, MA 01062 [info@highlandvalley.org](mailto:info@highlandvalley.org) [www.highlandvalley.org](http://www.highlandvalley.org)

Highland Valley Elder Services, Inc. is federally designated as an AAA, is a state designated Aging Services Access Point and works in twenty-four communities in Hampshire and Hampden counties. Their mandate as an AAA is to promote comprehensive and coordinated resources for elders and their families. The designation as an ASAP allows them to provide access to resources for home and community based care. Their mission is to serve older adults and their families through collaboration, education and advocacy and a range of programs designed to support them where they live.

For more information or if people have questions about the application, they may Kelly Ensor, Associate Director of Quality Assurance at 413586-2000, extension 596.

## Program on Oxbox rescheduled

NORTHAMPTON – Jonathan Moldover, author of “The Oxbow Since Thomas Cole: The Story of a Landscape, a Painting, and a Community,” will talk on Wednesday, April 30 from 6:30-7:45 p.m. the Coolidge Museum, about the community which has developed on the Oxbox since the late nineteenth century, accompanied by video clips from the oral history project. which was the basis of the book.

The Coolidge Museum is located at the Forbes Library, 20 West St. Seats will be available first come, first served in the Coolidge Museum. This event will also be livestreamed on the Forbes YouTube channel.

He will talk about how nature as well as political and business interests have changed the island, and the remarkable resilience of the Oxbox community. He will also explain why the island crossed the river and why the highway crossed the island.

# WESTFIELD

## Friends of Westfield Athenaeum to hold book sale fundraiser

WESTFIELD – Books and puzzles are needed for Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum book sale fundraiser.

The Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum seeks donations of gently used adult and children’s books and jigsaw puzzles for their upcoming book sale. Donations will only be accepted by curbside drop-off at the back door of the First United Methodist Church, 16 Court St., Westfield, during the week of April 21-26 as follows: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday from 4-7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m.-noon.

Musty or damaged books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, textbooks, Reader’s Digest books or outdated manuals, travel books or self-help books will not be accepted. The book sale will be held at the First United Methodist Church on Thursday, May 8 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, May 9 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday, May 10 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.. On Thursday only, the Friends are offering a \$5 discount coupon for educators, who bring their ID and new Friends members joining at the door.

People may visit their website at <https://www.friendsofwestath.org/>. The Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum is an all-volunteer 501(C)3 not-for-profit organization that supports the programs and services of the Westfield Athenaeum.

## Children’s Advocacy Center holds events for child abuse month

NORTHAMPTON — The Children’s Advocacy Center of Hampshire County is gearing up for a series of activities to mark Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month in April, including flag-raising ceremonies and the fifth annual luminaria to honor those committed to protecting children.

The public is invited. “These events serve as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to protect and support our children,” said CAC Director Kara McElhone. “By raising awareness and recognizing those who go above and beyond, we hope to inspire continued action toward a future free from child abuse.”

This Little Light Of Mine Luminaria, on Thursday, April 17 at 5:30 p.m. at the Garden House at Look Park, will feature a brief program of speakers and an awards ceremony. The Belchertown Public Schools and Police Department will be honored with the Linda L. Pisano Award for Excellence given to individuals or organizations demonstrating extraordinary dedication to ensuring children receive the care and protection they deserve.

To support the work of the CAC, people can donate to help fund advocacy programs, awareness initiatives and essential resources for children in need. To make a donation, people may visit the Children’s Advocacy Center’s website.

# WILLIAMSBURG

## Grange to hold contra dance

WILLIAMSBURG – The Williamsburg “Burdy” Grange, 10 Main St., will hold a community contra dance on Saturday, April 26 from 7-9 p.m. in the Grange Hall.

No experience is necessary and no special skills are required. All dances will be taught. All are welcome and this program is suitable for all ages.

Steven Howland is the general dance caller. George Wilson and Annika Amstutz, fiddlers; Becky Hollingsworth, piano and friends.

Admission is by donations. Proceeds are split 50-50 with the Grange.

## Meekins to exhibit Chuck Stern works

WILLIAMSBURG – Meekins Library, 2 Williams St., will exhibit the works from 2021-2025 of Church Stern.

A reception will be held on Saturday, April 5 from 1-3:30 p.m.

# STOCKBRIDGE

## Stockbridge Grange hold community dinner

STOCKBRIDGE – The Stockbridge Grange, 51 Church St., will hold a community dinner on Sunday, April 13 with pickup for take out only from noon-1:30 p.m.

The take out meal features stuffed breast of chicken, mashed potato, vegetable and dessert with choices of chocolate cream or lemon meringue pie. Dinner is \$15 per person.

Orders may be made by calling either 413-243-1298 or 413-443-4352. Grange dinners are held to raise money for non-profit projects and building maintenance.

# MIDDLEFIELD

## MCC to hold service

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Congregational Church will be holding their monthly Church Service on Saturday, April 5 at 5 p.m at the church.

A ham dinner will be held after the service. All are welcome and desserts are always appreciated.

# WORTHINGTON

## Library hosts embroidery class

WORTHINGTON – The Friends of the Worthington Library will host an embroidery class with Dave Dimock on Saturday, April 5 from 2-5 p.m. in the Worthington Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road.

Ages 13 plus and all levels are welcome. The class is limited to 12 participants. Dimock will teach the basics of crewel embroidery, share a bit of the history of the craft, show examples of his own work and provide helpful hints.

Cost is \$45 per person, which includes an embroidery kit that participants will take home at the end of the class. All fees go to materials and to support children’s programs, museum passes and wishlist books at the library. People should register in person at the Worthington Library, 1 Huntington Road or call the library at 413-238-5565 during library hours.





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The Granby Highway Department has a 40 hour per week position available for a Light Equipment Operator/Laborer. This position requires the ability to operate various types of machinery, hand tools and equipment (examples include lawnmowers, plows, sanders, asphalt paving equipment). The position is Grade 3 classification. Steps within this grade range from \$18.72-\$24.42 per hour. A valid Massachusetts class A or B CDL driver's license is required. Special consideration will be given to candidates who possess the higher license class, or additional licenses and or relevant construction experience that would be determined to be beneficial to the operations of the Highway Department. Please contact the Highway Superintendent at **413-467-7575** at the **Highway Garage (15 Crescent St, Granby MA 01033)** for further information, a copy of the job description and/or an application for employment. Applications will be accepted through May 1, 2025.

**The Town of Huntington is seeking a full-time Chief of Police.** \$75,000 - \$90,000 yearly salary based on qualifications. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Deadline to apply is 4/28/2025. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

#### TOWN OF WILBRAHAM

#### Human Resources Coordinator

The Town of Wilbraham is looking for an HR Coordinator to join our team. For application and more info, visit **www.wilbraham-ma.gov**. Application deadline 4/11/2025

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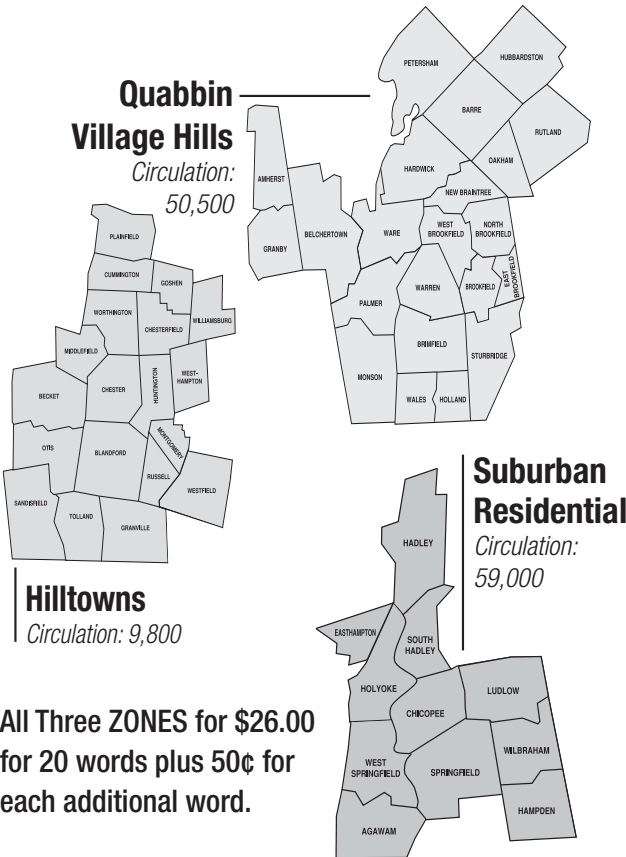
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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

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OBITUARIES

Merrill Bancroft, 85



Merrill Bancroft, age 85, of Townsend, passed away at his home on March 18, 2025. Merrill was pre-deceased by his wife of 51 years, Rita Gould Bancroft, formerly of Cummington. Merrill was born in Chesterfield on Sept. 23, 1939, son of Marion (Read) and Robert Hayes Bancroft. He leaves a brother, Douglas Bancroft and his wife Joanne, of Leeds, MA, and was pre-deceased by his brother Russell Bancroft of Ware.

Merrill graduated with honors from Smith Vocational High School, Northampton in 1957 and later attended Holyoke Community College. He earned an associate's degree in electrical engineering from Lowell Technical Institute. Merrill entered the

Navy at the age of 17, training at the Electronics Technician School in Great Lakes, Illinois later serving on the aircraft carriers USS Leyte and the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt, attaining the rating of Electronics Technician Second Class. He was employed at Kolmorgan Corporation in Northampton for several years.

For 33 years, he was employed as a Customer Service Technician with Grason-Stadler Company, a leader in the design and manufacturing of hearing diagnostic instrumentation, in West Concord, Massachusetts and later in Milford, New Hampshire,



from 1968-2001. He also operated "The Electronic Shop" in Chesterfield for several years.

Merrill loved the Lord. He served as Deacon at the West Townsend

Baptist Church for a number of years and most recently attended Christ Church Townsend for the past two years. He enjoyed many interests and hobbies, restoring player pianos, antique cars, reading history books, collecting postmarks and artifacts related to antique automobiles and antique radio equipment. A member of the Antique Wireless Association, Merrill began collecting radios and arti-

facts from the early 1920s at the age of 12, later exhibiting his extensive collection of nearly 1000 items in a museum. He participated in and won many competitions concerning radio history at antique radio meets in Massachusetts, New York, Michigan, North Carolina and other places throughout the years. This included receiving the highly coveted Houck award for historical wireless preservation.

There will be a Celebration of Life Service at Pepperell Christian Fellowship, 17 Main St., Pepperell, MA on Saturday, April 12, at 10 a.m.. He will be buried in Chesterfield. Memorial contributions may be made to the SPCA. Please visit [www.McGaffiganFuneral.com](http://www.McGaffiganFuneral.com).

Glenn Roland Thayer, 97



Glenn Roland Thayer, a loving husband, devoted father and adventurer at heart, peacefully passed away on March 17, 2025 at the age of 97.

Born in 1928, Glenn grew up during the Great Depression, which shaped his life and instilled qualities that would guide him throughout his life; resilience, frugality, an appreciation of the simplest things and a strong work ethic, to name a few.

His humble beginnings in Russell with his seven siblings were the source of many a great tale told of the escapades carried out by Glenn and his brothers and sisters. As a teen, he and his brothers spent many a day on their old Indian and Harley motorcycles also the source of many tales told.

At the tender age of 17, Glenn embarked on his first great journey by joining the Merchant Marines. He fearlessly set sail and explored the vast oceans, eager to experience the world beyond the confines of his hometown. While with the Merchant Marines he found himself delivering supplies to the front lines at the Battle of The Bulge. Glenn's thirst for

adventure led him to join the Navy Reserve, then the Air Force in the early 1950s, where he continued to serve his country with honor and dedication.

Glenn's favorite military story was his four month assignment at Fletcher Ice Island at the North Pole, "T-3," where in 1953, during the height of the Cold War, he and eight others were based manning a weather station. He and his comrades lived in an underground shelter enduring the harsh conditions of the Arctic with its 80 degree below temps. It was Glenn's job to maintain all of the equipment and vehicles on the ice island as well as the electricity. He also maintained the runway for incoming supply carrying planes and told of chasing polar bears away while plowing with a Snow-Cat. He exhibited bravery and resilience, contributing to the scientific endeavors conducted there.

Glenn's service to his country led him to be stationed with NATO forces in Izmir, Turkey for 3 years.



Upon returning to the United States, Glenn and his beloved wife, Nancy, settled in Palmer. He continued his military service in the Air Force Reserves for 21 years as a vehicle maintenance

supervisor with the 439th ABG. and retired as a MSgt. He was a dedicated electrician for Tambrands for 30 years.

Glenn, as well as all of his brothers, was known for his uncanny mechanical ability. He could fix anything that was broken or create/invent a replacement. He could normally be found with a screwdriver in hand, tinkering in his garage. His favorite hobby was restoring old Corvettes, which he would purchase at junk yards and piece by piece, restore them to pristine condition. In more recent years he enjoyed planting, harvesting, eating and sharing green peas from his extensive pea garden. If he couldn't be found, we knew to look for him on his knees amongst the peas.

Besides his father and mother, Howard and

Gertrude, he was preceded in death by his sister, Ruth, and brothers Roger, Leigh and Harland. He leaves his cherished wife of 73 years, Nancy; his son, Mark and wife Claudia; his daughter, Rhonda and husband David; sisters Janet Maslar of Sarasota, Florida and Connie Herman and brother Richard and wife Betty of Russell. He leaves four grandchildren and six great grandchildren as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Glenn Thayer will be remembered as a remarkable individual who embraced life's adventures with an indomitable spirit. His legacy will live on through the memories he created, the values he instilled, and the love he shared with all those fortunate enough to have known him. As we mourn his loss, let us celebrate the extraordinary life he lived and find solace in the knowledge that his spirit will forever remain in our hearts. A memorial service to honor Glenn will be held privately at a later date. Donations in Glenn's name can be made to The Baystate Hospice.

Beers & Story Funeral Homes

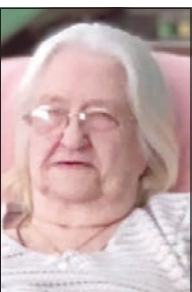
Elizabeth "Betty" Ann (Ferry) Wheeler, 89

Elizabeth "Betty" Ann (Ferry) Wheeler, 89, a long time resident of Worthington passed away at home on Thursday, March 13, 2025. She was predeceased by her beloved husband of 60 years, Courtney S. Wheeler.

Born on June 17, 1935, in Springfield, Betty was the daughter of Frederick and Barbara (Fraser) Ferry. As a teenager, she moved with her family to Chester and graduated from Chester High

School in 1953.

Betty had a love for reading and enjoyed many pastimes including bowling, playing pitch, traveling, camping, fishing and boating - activities she often shared with Cory. Together, they raised five children: Cheryl A. Preston-Major (Ronald), Sandra L. Cameron (Shawn),



Dianne E. Sullivan (Todd) and Charles S. Wheeler (Michelle). She is also survived by 12 grand children; nine great-grandchildren; her older brother, Herbert

Ferry and two younger sisters, Beverly Ostrom and Carolyn Porter.

She was predeceased by two grandchildren, Melissa

Dufraine and Kenneth Dejordy; her sister, Barbara LaRock and Virginia Blake and her brother, Frederick Ferry.

A graveside service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Worthington Fire and Rescue, 51 Huntington Road, Worthington, MA 01098, in recognition of their dedication and many acts of kindness.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampshire  
Probate and Family Court  
15 Atwood Drive  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(413)586-8500  
Docket No. HS24P0575EA  
Estate of:  
Christopher Roy Patterson  
Also known as:  
Christopher R. Patterson  
Date of Death: 07/09/2024  
CITATION ON PETITION  
FOR FORMAL  
ADJUDICATION  
To all interested persons:  
A Petition for S/A - Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Jennifer L. Orzolek of Easthampton, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.  
The Petitioner requests

that: Jennifer L. Orzolek of Easthampton, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.  
IMPORTANT NOTICE  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/30/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.  
UNSUPERVISED

ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)  
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.  
WITNESS, Hon. Diana S. Velez Harris, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: March 24, 2025  
Mark S Ames,  
Register of Probate  
04/03/2025

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DEATH NOTICES

**BANCROFT, MERRILL**  
Died March 18, 2025  
Celebration of Life Service on April 12 at 10 a.m. at Pepperell Christian Fellowship, 17 Main St., Pepperell. Burial in Chesterfield Memorial.

**THAYER, GLENN ROLAND**  
Died March 17, 2025  
A Memorial Service to honor Glenn will be held privately at a later date.

**WHEELER, ELIZABETH "BETTY" (FERRY)**  
Died March 13, 2025  
Graveside service will be held at later date.

Country Journal  
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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



The trolley railbed can clear by seen. Submitted photos



The raised hill on the Wyantenuck Country Club is the trolley bed. It was raised and lowered along the way to keep the grade manageable for the trolley cars.



The bridge abutment, far left, remains. This was for the trolley bridge over over the NY, NH and Hartford Railroad.



Liz and Gary are shown in front of the historic Wheeler homestead.



Above, Karen stands on a trolley railbed above a cattle crossing. These tunnels were created so that the animals in pastures could safely pass. Below, The 1910 Carnegie steel truss trolley bridge at the Wyantenuck Country Club.



## Local historian narrates trolley bed hike

Saturday’s group hike was narrated by special guest Gary Leveille, author and historian, was on the Berkshire Street Railway from Great Barrington Historical to Egremont hiking Western Massachusetts history.

All enjoyed a 2.5 mile in and back journey on the over 100 year old trolley bed including the stories of travel and transportation here in South County and it’s struggles including a robbery right here of the trolley men’s payroll. The journey started at the Wheeler Family Farmstead, built in 1771. It was the last surviving farm located near downtown.

Today it is the home of the Great Barrington Historical Society. The trolley spur we traveled jutted off of its main route following Route 7 at this point and on to the West towards Egremont.

The Berkshire Street Railway trolley line was extended from Great Barrington to South Egremont as a spur. A massive amount of fill was dug and dumped during construction. Giant concrete monoliths were built to support a bridge that carried the trolley cars high above the Ny, NH and Hartford railroad tracks. Those remains can still be seen.

Unfortunately, the spur

to South Egremont operated only until 1919 when a strike ended service. Much of the fill was removed in the 1940s and used elsewhere. One of the massive towers still survives near the northeast corner of Wyantenuck Country Club and the trolley bed including a Carnegie truss bridge from 1910, which still stands.

Thank you to Gary Leveille and the Great Barrington Historical Society for sharing history with the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers. He writes a Then and Now series in a local newspaper and has published books. Leveille is keeping Hilltown history alive.



This shows a trolley car on Main Street, on Great Barrington.

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