

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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HUNTINGTON

Select Board update

Select Board applies to close County Road to heavy vehicles

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Select Board members heard updates on prohibiting heavy commercial vehicles from traveling on County Road, removing unregistered vehicles from 32 Russell Road and proposed plans for expanding the community garden located on the former Murrayfield Elementary School property.

All select board members and Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin were present at their Monday, April 6 meeting. Police Chief Brian Kowal said that a signed cover letter and final wording for signs that would prohibit heavy commercial vehicles from traveling on County Road will complete the town's application to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation on this

SELECT BOARD, page 7

BLANDFORD

Truck fire causes temporary closing of service plaza

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

"It was a pretty big fire," said Fire Chief Adam Dolby back at the fire station after the fire at the Westbound Service Plaza had been extinguished.

The cab of a tractor trailer was fully involved when the Blandford Volunteer Fire Department arrived, shortly after the 12:31 p.m. emergency noti-

fication. Black billowing smoke was seen from the center of town and west. It was a three-alarm fire call.

One-alarm fire call requires just the immediate local fire department presence. A two-alarm fire calls for (water) tankers and a three-alarm fire call requires any available tankers and (water) pumps.

The semi had pulled up to the diesel fuel pumps when the fire started. The



Photos by Fire Chief Adam Dolby

This is what the Blandford Volunteers found when they arrived on site at 12:43 p.m. After the fire was extinguished, the cab was totally destroyed and part of the trailer as well. The overhead section above the fuel pumps was also destroyed.

driver was not injured.

Diesel is flammable but has a higher flash point than gasoline, making it less volatile and safer in terms of flammability. It will still burn, but it needs a great deal more heat to combust.

The fire suppression equipment over the fuel pumps was essential in getting the fire under control. The firefighters on site used foam suppression as well to prevent the fire from spreading. The white dregs from the foam could be seen on

the pavement after the fire was out.

"I was worried that the fire would spread to the building," said Dolby, but it did not. He said the trailer was empty, "which was a good thing."

The overhead protection above the diesel pumps was destroyed.

Dolby contacted the Water Department to activate the pump on North Street to increase water pressure.

FIRES, page 3



CHESTER

Historic dining car finds new home

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

One hundred year-old Lenny Alexander of Otis was on hand when the former Bernie's Dining Depot railroad car was moved through the railroad underpass and onto the grounds of the Chester Railway Station and Museum last Dec. 22.

He returned for the final phase of the project on Friday, April 10 when the car was moved onto its per-



Turley Publications photos by Wendy Long

The former Bernie's Dining Depot railroad dining car concluded its journey to being placed on the grounds of the Chester Railroad Station and Museum on Friday, April 10.

manent resting place next to the station platform. Red's Towing arrived with a crane to lift the front end of the car and two rotators to lift the back end onto the "trucks" located behind the blue caboose. In railway terms, trucks are the chassis structure that rail cars sit upon.

"It's quite an operation," Alexander said. "These guys are good at what they do."

The event had special meaning for Alexander because he had grown up on Middlefield Street in Chester and his father had worked on the railroad.

Museum president Dave Pierce said that Alexander had also played a role at the museum when their station platform was built.

DINING CAR, page 6

BLANDFORD

Select Board discuss highway workers concerns

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Select Board discussed with Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay the concerns the department workers had with selected items: support for Commercial Driver's License, any materials for same, lesser licenses and renewal costs once obtained.

The board stood fast in its decision to offer workers two-thirds of the cost of obtaining a CDL

Once earned and having successfully passed test requirements, the CDL holder has this license for life and is a serious undertaking according to Select Board member Ted Cousineau.

"We're investing in them...they need to invest in themselves," he said, and added, "I think this is more than fair."

Cousineau later added, "If they're not going to invest in themselves, (they'd) better find another job."

The town will cover \$6,000 for the course

while the employee will cover the final \$3,000. Cousineau said, "There are payment plans."

The employees wanted the town to cover the total cost, plus the time to take the month-long course as well.

Coury said, "This is not a viable solution. You cannot commit anyone to stay on the job." The concern on the part of the board was once a CDL was achieved, employees could go elsewhere.

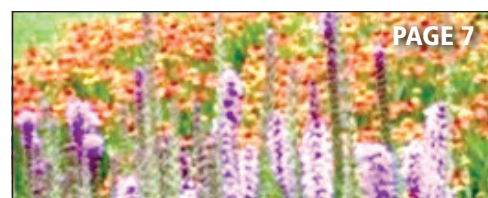
There is an additional \$150 for supplies, but the 192-page instruction manual is available online at no charge. The copy machine at town hall may be used to print this.

The town will, however, cover the cost for licenses such as hoisting, plus license renewals except for drivers' licenses.

There were no changes made to the CDL policy. Once a CDL is obtained, there is mandatory random drug testing, which the town will pay for.

Discussing the pay

CONCERNS, page 3



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HILLTOWNS

MassDOT lists I-90 roadwork

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

All work is weather dependent and will take place at the following locations and times:

In West Stockbridge, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 1.3 now through Friday, April 17 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. In Lee, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound at mile marker 8.8 now through Saturday, April 18 from 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

In Becket, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 20.0 from now through Friday, April 17 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Tree trimming will be conducted on I-90 westbound at mile marker 15.0 on Thursday, April 16 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

In Blandford, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 26.2 now through Friday, April 17 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Guardrail work will

be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 27.0 to mile marker 29.0 now through Friday, April 17 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. In Blandford and Russell, guardrail work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 30.0 to mile marker 32.0 now through Thursday, April 16 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. Drivers traveling through the area should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

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

PVPC allots over \$288,000 in DLTA grant awards

To be put towards supporting communities with local projects

SPRINGFIELD – The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) announced its most recent Direct Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant awards, allotting \$288,682 to support projects across Hampden and Hampshire counties. The projects span a wide range of community priorities, from establishing a shared regional building inspector in Western Hampden County, to developing town-wide communications policies. Some additional work includes land use and comprehensive planning efforts, updates to zoning and regulations, flood risk outreach, exploration of housing production strategies, permitting and bylaw modernization, and farmland protection initiatives. Projects are set to begin over the following weeks.

“Providing technical assistance to communities across Western Massachusetts is critical to the work we do at PVPC. We understand and recognize our municipalities - what they do, what they need, and how they can flourish,” said Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director of PVPC. “In a region where many municipalities are small, rural, suburban, and operate with limited staff and resources, we are proud at PVPC to collaborate with those that need it most. From creative solutions to unruly problems, to updat-

ing and perfecting current plans, to looking out for what’s best for community members. By working together at the regional level, PVPC helps communities turn their ideas into lasting improvements that benefit residents for years to come.”

The PVPC is able to provide this local technical assistance at no cost to these communities thanks to funding provided by the Massachusetts Legislature with the support of local legislators, under a contract with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) for the DLTA Program.

Some of the projects which will be supported are:

1. Granville - “Shared Building Inspector Through PVPC Program”, create shared building inspector position with other towns in the Western Hampden County region.
2. East Longmeadow - “East Longmeadow Communications Policy”, advance a Town-wide Communications Policy for internal and external communications.
3. Monson/Palmer - “Shared Services Council On Aging/Recreation”, evaluation/study of possible shared services of both Palmer and Monson Council On Aging and Recreation departments.
4. Belchertown - “Land Use Plan for the Coming Decade”, Land Use element of Comprehensive Plan.
5. Blandford - “Permit Review Process Permitting Guide - Town of Blandford”, Solar/Battery Energy Storage

System Zoning Bylaw and Overlay work.

6. Hadley - “Hadley Flood Risk Management Outreach Project”, Flood Risk Management Outreach.

7. Huntington - “Town of Huntington Master Plan”, updating permitting guidebook and Master Plan components

8. Ludlow - “Ludlow Future Growth”, 40R exploration

9. Palmer - “Palmer Subdivision Rules and Regulations Update”, subdivision regulations and permitting guide

10. Plainfield - “Comprehensive Community Plan/Vision for Future”, putting together a comprehensive plan for public engagement

11. Russell - “General Bylaw and Zoning Bylaw Review and Update”, bylaws review and update

12. Southampton - “Southampton Zoning Bylaw Review to Support Housing Production”, evaluating housing-related bylaws like inclusionary zoning and multifamily zoning

13. Match for Farmland Protection Action Grant - supplement funds for a project PVPC is working on as part of the Massachusetts Farmland Partnership Program

14. Open Space and Recreation Plan - funds are set aside for PVPC to respond to comments from the state on local plans that have been submitted for review

PVPC’s Land Use & Environment department is driving bold, community-centered change across the region. They help cities and towns bring their visions to

life through smart zoning, comprehensive planning, and strategies that support vibrant, resilient, and sustainable communities. Their work blends local goals with regional priorities to protect the environment, advance affordable housing, and preserve community character. They partner with municipalities, agencies, nonprofits, and the private sector to expand access to clean, renewable energy, build green infrastructure, and safeguard natural resources like rivers, forests, and drinking water. They help communities confront the effects of climate change, reduce food insecurity, and plan for natural hazards with resilience in mind. With technical expertise and a passion for sustainability, the Land Use and Environment team helps communities grow wisely, equitably, and in harmony with the environment - ensuring a thriving Pioneer Valley for generations to come.

PVPC’s Community and Economic Development Department works with the region’s 43 cities and towns to strengthen local economies and support community development across the Pioneer Valley. The department provides technical assistance on a wide range of initiatives, including capital planning, shared services, digital equity, and strategic economic development. By assisting municipalities with grant writing, project management, and long-term planning, the department helps communities secure funding, address local challenges, and advance projects that improve quality of life across the region.

CHESTERFIELD



Submitted photo

The annual fishing derby sponsored by the Chesterfield 4 Seasons Club will be held Sunday, May 17 from 9 a.m.-noon at Bisbee’s Pond in Chesterfield.

Fishing derby set for May 17

CHESTERFIELD –The Chesterfield 4 Seasons Club will hold its annual fishing derby on Sunday, May 17 from 9 a.m. sharp to noon..

This annual event is held at Bisbee’s Pond for children ages 14 and under. This has been a successful event for more than 38 years, which is completely

run by volunteers and donations provided.

The Chesterfield 4 Season’s is grateful for any and all donations provided. Any of the following items are needed: fishing supplies, prizes, gift cards or monetary donations are appreciated. Monetary donations are used to purchase prizes.

Food and beverages are provided to children and families at no cost to them.

No donation is too small and the 4 Seasons thanks people for their support. Checks should be payable to: The Chesterfield Four Seasons/Kids Derby, P.O. Box 48, Chesterfield, MA 01012.

RUSSELL

Library announces access to ancestry database

RUSSELL – Russell Public Library, 162 Main St., patrons will be able to access the Ancestry.com database from their public computers.

“Many of our patrons have asked for resources relating to genealogical research and specifically about access to and help

with Ancestry. Access to this database will be a valuable asset for our patrons,” said Jennifer Waldorf, Library Director.

Library staff will go through training on how to assist patrons in getting started with Ancestry and how to conduct research once they have a profile

established.

In addition, Hillary Schau, a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists will be conducting a non-digital, beginning genealogy class in May, with potential for future follow-up workshops. People may visit the Russell Public Library to learn more.

MIDDLEFIELD

Council on Aging lists menu and watercolor painting event

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail serves lunch at noon every Wednesday.

Take out is available. People should RSVP on Monday by calling 413-

623-9990. The menu choice is baked ziti or turkey and gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans butternut squash, applesauce and a beverage. Suggested donation is \$4.

A watercolor paint-

ing class will take place on Wednesday at 1 p.m. with instructor Kay Judge. This program is funded through a Cultural Council Grant at no cost. The class is held the last Wednesday of the month from April till July.

Library hosts universe tour

MIDDLEFIELD – Local amateur astronomer, Rick Breen, will present a tour of the universe on Thursday, April 30 at 7 p.m. in the Middlefield Town Hall.

This interactive talk sponsored by the Middlefield Public Library is intended to inspire folks to step out and

look at the beautiful skies in the Hilltowns. Breen will discuss constellations, tools of astronomy such as binoculars and telescopes, and observing or tracking the moon and planets. Photos from observatories and local astronomers will be presented. All questions are welcome.

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BLANDFORD

Library holds special preschool program

BLANDFORD – A Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative grant provided funds for a special program by the BaNannies at the Porter Memorial Library Saturday morning, April 11.

The BaNannies is a mother-daughter team specializing in early childhood educational entertainment. The team performed music and dance with stories and animation.

There was a full house attending the event, which

was part of an overall week celebrating the Week of the Young Child.

CPPI grants are available to support local coordination and investment in access to high-quality preschool. The grant program aims to provide 3- and 4-year-olds in a district with equitable access to high-quality preschool, while ensuring families have multiple provider options to choose from across public and community-based



BaNannies provide music, dance and stories at a recent program funded by a Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative grant.

classrooms. This levels the playing field for kindergarten readiness across the district, establishing coordinated curriculum and similar goals regardless of where a child is enrolled.

According to the state website, through CPPI, the Department of Early Education and Care funds districts across the state to develop partnerships between school districts and local early education and care programs to expand access to high quality preschool.

Hagstrom appointed Library Trustee

BLANDFORD – Select Board and Library Trustees voted Monday, April 6 to appoint Amy Hagstrom to complete the two years remaining for Charles (Chuck) Benson's trustee term.

He resigned his position after over 25 years of service to the Porter Memorial Library. Hagstrom is a resident and local author and "believes deeply in the power of libraries, and I am eager to support the Porter Memorial Library in its new chapter."

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in creative writing and English and "has been a lifelong reader."



Amy Hagstrom

As an author with three books in the world, she said that she is committed to the concept that libraries are for the entire community.

"I look forward to getting to know more Blandford residents as I serve in this capacity," she said.



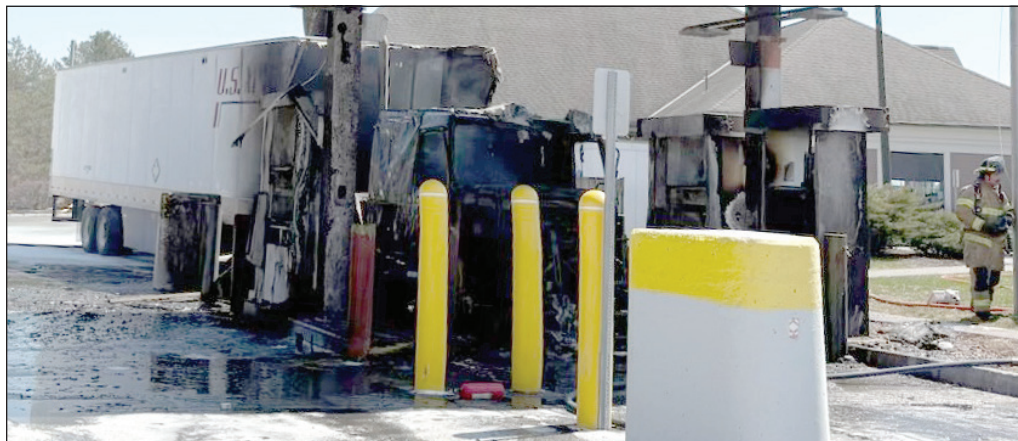
BaNannies, a mother daughter team, entertain young children at the Porter Memorial Library in Blandford on Saturday, April 11.

Courtesy photos by Michele Crane



Firefighter hoses down flames at the trailer.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm



Fire suppression residue, the white on the pavement, and the destroyed section of the trailer.



Remains of cab were loaded on a trailer and moved to RW's in Lee.

FIRE

from page 1

"That really made a difference," said Dolby.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announced shortly before 2 p.m. that the Blandford service plaza on I-90 westbound was closed due to a vehicle fire. Message boards directed vehicles in need of fuel to exit at I-90 westbound exit 41 in Westfield. The turnpike was never closed.

By 3:30 p.m. the fire had been extinguished and flatbed trucks from RW's Towing

in Lee had arrived and loaded the semi's remains to be removed.

Dolby said there were nine members of the town's volunteer fire department on site.

"For some of the guys, it was their first fire," he said.

"My team did great," said Dolby.

He guessed that the cause of the fire was possibly "some sort of mechanical malfunction" in the cab.

Many fire departments

from throughout the area responded to the Mutual Aid call and included Becket, Chester, Otis, Russell, Huntington, Tolland, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, West Springfield and others and Becket Ambulance was on site as well.

The State Fire Marshal was on site as was Mass DOT, the Department of Environmental Protection and multiple State Police as well as local police. The fire is under investigation.

CONCERNS

from page 1

scale, the board indicated that the amounts have not changed, it's "just done by percentages," said Coury.

The board then reviewed Hultay's performance as superintendent. Technical knowledge and skills Letendre said he "exceeds expectations," and the others agreed. He does, however, need to work on the administrative effort, which had been discussed at a prior meeting.

Problem solving again was cited as needing improvement on the administrative side, and Cousineau said Hultay needed to come to his decisions "more decisively" and mentioned Gore Road. The review conversation was side tracked with a discussion of tree work, what the Highway Department does, what the Tree Warden does, and how Conservation is involved. The canopy account, according to Hultay is "for bigger trees" that the department's smaller bucket truck cannot reach.

According to Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts reports, Blandford spends more money on tree work than other local towns of similar size; those towns reported as much as \$6,000 according to Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera. STAM is a group of administrators from towns with less than 12,000 population across the state.

Hultay also told the board that Ch. 90 funds can be used for tree work as long as it is in conjunction with road work; which is what is happening on Gore Road.

Coury asked, "What is your plan for the trees?" She said the board has not seen any plan, and added, "That's just not good oversight financially." She then asked about coordinating with the Tree Warden, Mark Boomsma. Cousineau spoke to working with the Tree Warden as well, and said,

"In a sense, the Highway Department is doing some of the Tree Warden work."

Regarding Planning and Organization, Coury said there is still room to improve on planning "administrative stuff" and gave the Franklin Regional Council of Governments bid as an example of lack of organization. As far as fuel goes, Hultay believes the town is on target to use all the fuel by the end of the fiscal year. And for heating oil, there is now 3,664 gallons of oil to use by June 30, or within six months after that. Hultay predicts that the town will use the heating oil up; the Town Hall has a 10,000-gallon oil tank that can handle that amount. The price of the heating oil is locked in at \$2.69 a gallon, and if not used by June 30, there will be a \$.05 cent a gallon charge for "storage."

Current bids will close in May and FRCOG will get back to the town with the results.

Hultay is completing this.

Letendre suggested that for next year Hultay have a digital reminder set so the town does not end up in a similar situation for calculating and submitting information for bidding.

The ordering is done by John Hoppe.

It was pointed out that there is no one person responsible for all town buildings, no maintenance person. Hultay provided the number of gallons for the bid process for vehicle fuel and heating oil for the current fiscal year.

Cousineau wanted to know why Hultay had not received a March 11 email regarding oil bidding and Coury said she would contact FRCOG to find out what happened.

Regarding communications, Letendre said he communicated well with his employees, they understand their tasks; in that respect

he exceeds expectations, but said that he needs better communication with the Select Board in any area he needs help with; community outreach is good, Coury said he turned around perception of the department; the employees like working for him and safety is a priority. Cousineau said, "You know the job."

Letendre reminded him of a prior comment about any area for improvement and said, "There's always something you can do better."

Coury said, "Nail the paperwork," adding that she wants to see improvement there, and Cousineau concluded with, "We've got your back."

Letendre added that he should stay within the budget.

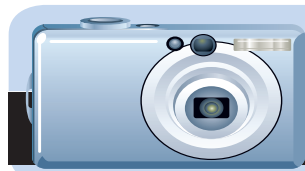
Coury on Wednesday made the following statement, "Overall, Ray Meets Expectations in his first year as our Highway Superintendent. He has been able to develop a terrific team focused on continuously improving our roads and meeting the needs of our community."

Regarding his contract Hultay said he would like to see included in the language reimbursements for licensing renewals and continuing education classes.

The board settled on a five percent increase for Hultay's position after lengthy discussion. This increase amounts to \$3,898 bringing his salary to \$81,128 and no additional winter overtime.

He then informed the board of the bid for work on the lower part of Russell Stage Road for \$79,187.75 from LB Corp.

In other business, the board appointed Amy Hagstrom to complete the remainder of the three-year term of Charles (Chuck) Benson who resigned from the Board of Trustees. Hagstrom will serve the remaining two years.



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

ELECTION LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to countryjournal@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Friday to be considered for the following Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news
As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers. Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Country Journal.

OPINION

Give yourself the gift of self-compassion



your health



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

Remember "tough love"? It was all the rage in the '80s and legitimized unkind or even cruel behaviors in pursuit of persuading a loved one to change their behavior.

"Positive narratives of tough love not only coursed through communities but also became a staple for television shows for decades," wrote Peg Streep in Psychology Today, "despite the fact that

there is no evidence – and never has been – that what is called tough love works in any context, including addiction."

So there. Tough love doesn't work on ourselves either. It's been shown that negative self-talk, beating ourselves up when we don't meet our own expectations, and ruminating over our perceived failures don't do anything to improve our state of

mind. In fact, it's damaging – and if you've ever been assessed for depression, those are some of the behaviors that might be identified.

There's a better way. This holiday season, give yourself the gift of self-compassion.

It's not just an idea. It's a way of living.

There's even an institute for its study and implementation, founded by Kristin Neff, an associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. A pioneer in the field of self-compassion research, she conducted the first empirical studies on self-compassion more than 20 years ago and now runs the Self-Compassion Institute (self-compassion.org).

What is self-compassion?

Neff explains that self-compassion is showing

HELP, page 5

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Candidate encourages voting

I'm Sherri Venditti and I'm on the ballot for a seat on the Middlefield Select Board in the upcoming election.

By way of introduction, I fell in love with Middlefield in 2003 and moved here in 2008. I admit I was initially lured by the beauty and quiet of the place, but in the years since I have learned it's the community of people here that makes Middlefield a truly amazing place to live and one which I don't ever want to leave.

My aim as a member of the Select Board is to listen to all residents with an open mind, do my own due diligence and research and then

arrive at decisions, which balance individual and communal needs and desires. I am an independent voice and vote, not one tied to any specific issue or faction. As a Board member I will be respectful of other opinions, listen to counter arguments, and always aim to arrive at a well-reasoned and balanced decision.

I ask people to vote at the ballot box on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Voting is in the morning, before the Annual Town Meeting. Contact the Town Clerk for possible early and absentee voting 623-2079 extension 201.

Sherri Venditti
Middlefield

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER



GUEST COLUMN

What I did last weekend in the garden

I was so looking forward to last Saturday, a day in which I did not have to drive anywhere. I could simply stay put and work on getting the yard in shape.

Boy, was it a long winter, and there was proof of that no matter where I turned.

Read on to learn which outdoor and indoor gardening activities kept me busy.

First I decided to tackle the perennial and shrub borders that I walk by the most often. Half of the reason we garden is because we like to stand back in admiration, so I figured if I cleaned those up I'd have something to feel good about on my way to the car or the chicken coop.

I leave many perennials standing through the winter, especially those with seed heads the birds might like to dine on.

So, before I got out the rake, I went plant by plant with my hedge clippers, cutting the dead and brown stalks to about "fist" height from the ground. Hedge clippers make fast work of this task. After that came the rake, with which I carefully cleaned the bed of matted leaves and the plant parts I just cut back. As I was working, I weeded out clover, and some perennial grasses that appeared within the bed, and although I am nowhere near ready to apply bark mulch, I got out the spade and did my best to put a crisp edge on the border with the lawn. Looking good.

While I was putting tools away I found (gasp) some hyacinth and daffodil bulbs that never got planted in the fall. I cannot even



by Roberta McQuaid



believe that there were green tips on these bulbs that sat in an empty pot in my unheated subarctic garden shed over the winter months.

I figured that after that torture they deserved to be planted. I sunk them twice their height deep and watered them in. Say a prayer.

My "Redbud garden" shares a stone wall with some thornless blackberry bushes. It may not have been smart on my account to have an ornamental garden opposite plants that like to sucker like crazy but such is life when you want to squeeze in as many plants as you can into the space you've got... Anyway, ten foot long canes jumped the wall into the bed where I have a few bulbs and biennials at the base of the Redbud.

I was able to give the canes a strong yank and lo and behold I have three new blackberry bushes free for the taking. I separated them from the mother plant, potted them up and will delight a friend with them, just as my friend Kelly's husband had done for me some years back.

These berries are so wonderful. Even with a small patch I am always able to freeze a couple of quarts for use in the off-season. Yum!

With stems cut back, leaves raked, weeds and suckers removed and the

beds given a crisp edge, I felt good enough about leaving outlying gardens for another day. It was time to turn my attention to tomato seedlings that had long since outgrown the seed packs the seeds were sown in the third week of March.

Typically we transplant when the first true leaves form. I am maybe a week late.

Carefully I lifted out the clumps of seedlings and gently pried the roots apart. Tomato seedlings can be sunk deeply, almost up to their leaves; new roots will form on the stems.

After a gentle watering they will go back under the grow lights they until they are big enough to be moved from the six packs to a four inch pot. Probably by May 1.

What is next on the agenda? Next weekend I have to assess my potato patch. I'll probably pull up old red raspberry canes nearby to expand the bed.

Blueberry bushes need some fertilizer. Asparagus could use lime and compost, probably some weeding as well.

There is never a dull moment this time of year, and I am not sure I'd want it any other way.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

GUEST COLUMN



When a spouse dies will the other get a Social Security Survivor Benefit?

Dear Rusty:

I am 79. My husband is also 79 and we both receive Social Security benefits. We were both married before and we married each other at the age of 58. Am I to understand correctly that when either of us dies, the surviving spouse is not eligible to collect the deceased spouse's Social Security benefits? Please correct me if I am wrong.

Signed: Curious Spouse

Dear Curious Spouse:

A surviving spouse only gets one benefit - either their own SS retirement amount, or their deceased spouse's amount, whichever is more. So, the Social Security benefit that the deceased was receiving at death will be paid to the surviving spouse, replacing any smaller SS payment the survivor was already collecting. To be sure you are aware, the surviving spouse will also be eligible for a one-time lump sum death benefit of \$255 (I know it isn't much, but it should be claimed anyway).

Also, unless the surviving spouse was already receiving a spousal benefit while both partners were living, the surviving spouse will need to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or at the local SS field office to make an appointment to apply for their survivor benefit.

One other thing to be aware of since you were both married before: if either of you die, and your first marriage lasted at least 10 years and your ex-spouse has also died, the surviving spouse will have a choice to collect a survivor benefit from either the ex-spouse or the most

recently deceased spouse, whichever amount is more. But, again, you can only collect one benefit payment as a surviving spouse either from your ex-spouse or from your recently deceased spouse, whichever benefit is higher.

FYI, survivor benefits are a confusing area of Social Security, so you might also find informative this article I recently published, as it goes more deeply into surviving spouse benefits including benefits for surviving minor children and surviving adult disabled children. Read the article titled "Demystifying Social Security Survivor Benefits" at www.amacfoundation.org/demystifying-social-security-survivor-benefits/. Of course, if you have any further questions, please contact us at 1-888-750-2622 or email us at SSadvisor@amacfoundation.org. There is never a fee for our services.

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

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OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Visiting a quarry with a lot of history

By Deborah Daniels
Correspondent

The Hilltown Hikers recently viewed another quarry.

This was not just another quarry, it was another tantalizing peak into early history. This soapstone quarry in Westfield had hard, greenish gray serpentine rock with dark green mottling. It became known as Westfield marble that was quarried in the late 1800s and shipped all over New England and beyond.

Westfield marble was used in buildings such as post offices and for decorative trim on stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City.

The quarry site contains all the remains of the quarry equipment such as the derrick parts and base, deep craters that were quarries and now filled with water. There were many hulking slabs of granite and soapstone some with chiseled grooves evident, strewn all about.

People can see the remains of a cart rail system that moved the quarried stone down to the finishing factory circa 1940. It was carted out by horse and carriage prior to that. These raw, preserved pieces of history tell the story like no museum could ever do.

Today's topic is about the belief that this site was always quarried even by primitive precolonial people. These early Americans made bowls from the soapstone and serpentine stone that was here. Prior to 1940 early tools such as shavers, chisel scrapers, gouges, drills and picks were found here. People can see some of these tools displayed at the Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Middleborough, 17 Jackson St.

How did they get there?



Turley photo by Deborah Daniels
The large quarry site in Middleborough is now filled with water.



Turley photo by Deborah Daniels
White quartz that would have been used to quarry the soapstone tools.



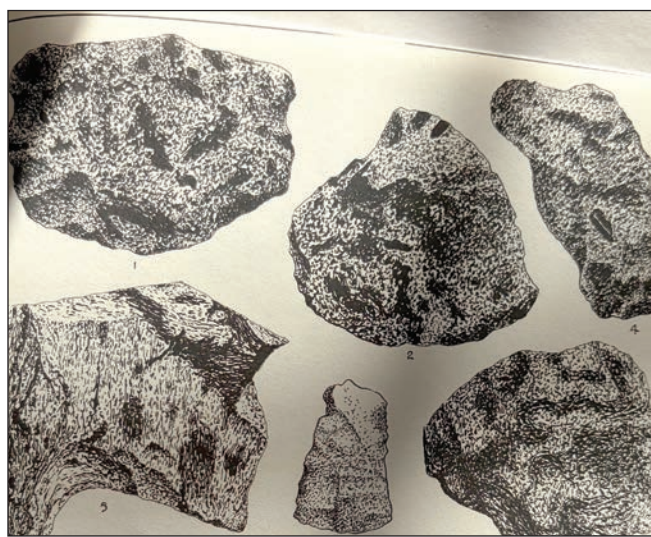
Turley photo by Deborah Daniels
Pieces of the quarry derrick and a boiler tank remain at the quarry site.



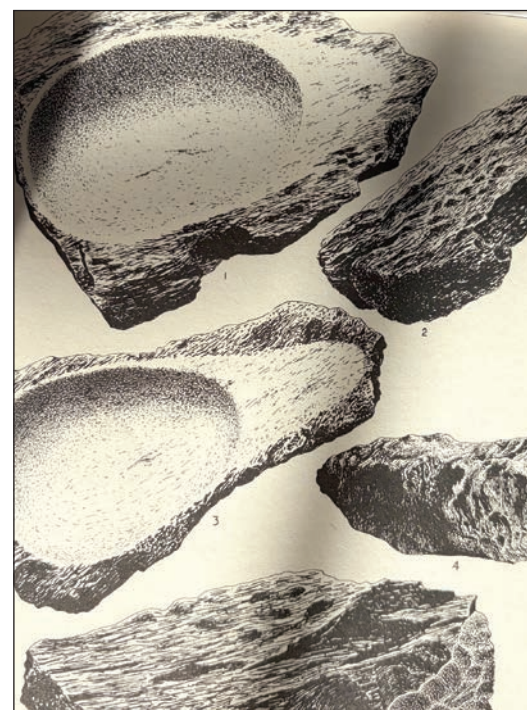
Turley photo by Deborah Daniels
A bridge abutment over the Little River still stands.



Turley photo by Deborah Daniels
This rock shows green serpentine crystal found at the quarry.



Submitted photo
Primitive stone tools showing two abrading scraper tools on top row and a hand gouge, top row, two corner and end pick stones on second row with a small scraper stone in the middle. Bottom row shows a tailing breaker stone with leather hafting used hatchet style and the last stones are large end picks for exploring the steatite vein.



Submitted photo
Here are some stone bowls.

That would be another research project. Many specimens are also suspected to be displayed in personal rock hound collections as well.

Tools such as shavers, chisel scrapers, gouges, drills and picks were found here. Picks had a pointed end with a smoother handle above that was used to

hammer into the bed rock to find a soapstone vein. Gauge stones and scraper stones that would abrade the rocks would be made here was a hollow bowl. Some of the bowls had carved handles. Scraper and shovel tools to scrape away the tailings or trash rock bits from

the worksite were also found here.

Hammerstones made of white quartz were used to shape the soapstone tools. The bowls quite possibly were the first vessels made to hold food apart from eating fresh animal kill off a spear. It is frustrating to see tools and not have a more

detailed portrait of the users.

They were extraordinary quarryers inventing and making the tools they needed, sculpting needed tools from the stone they had. They got to work and smashed out the tool to their very own specifications. Smashed does not do justice to the elegant rock shaping they did.

Alas the later day marble quarry work destroyed much of the early primitive quarry site so there is little there to see now. But oh how fantastic to think this kind of industry was going on way, way back right here in western Massachusetts. A field trip to Middleborough is in order and keep hiking.

HEALTH

from page 4

yourself the same care and consideration you would show to a friend who is struggling or feeling bad about themselves.

"It means being supportive when you're facing a life challenge, feel inadequate or make a mistake," she writes. "Instead of just ignoring your pain with a 'stiff upper lip' mentality or getting carried away by your negative thoughts and emotions, you stop to tell yourself: 'This is really difficult right now, how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?'"

She points out that when we berate ourselves for mistakes or setbacks, we lose confidence and often give up. "By contrast, self-compassion provides the emotional safety we need to keep trying, even when things don't go as planned," she explains. "Most importantly, it allows us to learn and grow from our mistakes rather than getting derailed by shame and anxiety."

Neff has created a little industry featuring books, workshops, coaching and videos that you can pay for, but there are also many free resources like guided practices and self-compassion exercises. A good place to start might be the self-evaluation,

which asks how often...

- I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.

- I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.

- I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Learning to practice self-compassion

Can we teach ourselves to become self-compassionate? Yes, but it takes work, and we may be trying to undo decades of behavior that stems from how we were raised, the people we've been exposed to, and the way we're used to talking to ourselves.

Here are a few things you can try:

Turn it around: Let's say you make a mistake at work or mess up a project. Rather than beating yourself up ("I'm such an idiot!"), imagine a friend in the same situation. Would you tell them they're an idiot? Probably not. You'd listen to them, offer a shoulder and discuss what to do differently the next time.

Put it in perspective: Remind yourself that struggle is a part of the human experience. You can say:

"I'm not alone in feeling this way," or "We all struggle sometimes."

Soothe yourself: Find a mantra that works for you: "I will accept myself as I am," for example. You can also place your hand over your heart or give yourself a hug.

Challenge negative thoughts: Write down what you're thinking or feeling, read it over and then replace those negative thoughts with kindness and compassion.

I wish all of you a peaceful – and self-compassionate – holiday season!

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

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

First Congregational Church of Blandford

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

First Congregational Church of Chester

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

First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

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

Hilltown Community Church

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

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Community Church



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Rev. Ronald F. Sadlowski, known as Fr. Ron
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413-862-4418
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parish@holyfamilyrussell.org
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Sunday Masses: 8:15 a.m. & 11 a.m.

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[pvagliffe@gmail.com](mailto:pvaglife@gmail.com)
www.pioneervalleyag.org
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
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Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

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

CHESTER

Hilltown Hikers offer group hike April 25

NEW MARLBOROUGH – On Saturday, April 25 at 10 a.m. the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers offer a group hike to Berkshire National Fish Hatchery in New Marlborough, barbecue and fly-tying clinic.

The barbecue lunch on the grill is sponsored by the Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery and the optional fly-tying demo/lesson after lunch.

The hike rating is an easy to moderate 2.5 mile loop with 435 feet of elevation gain. Sights to see include cellar holes, charcoaling site, glacial kettle and town boundary post. The location is the

Berkshire National Fish Hatchery, 240 Hatchery Road.

The Berkshire National Fish Hatchery was established along the Konkapot River in the late nineteenth century by Dr. Samuel Camp. He selected the site for its immediate proximity to the spring at the base

of the mountain that flowed through a 10-inch pipe and ran a cool 48 degrees year-round. Much of Dr. Camp's original vision and structure remains today. The Berkshire National Fish Hatchery is situated on 148 acres of forested land that is the source of a pristine aquifer, supplying 200 gallons per minute of the pure oxygen-rich water trout love through various pools. The woodland trails that surround the aquifer are home to many diverse species of wildlife, making the Hatchery a special place for learning about not only fish culture, but also about the natural history of the Berkshires.

The Berkshire National Fish Hatchery is a cold-water aquaculture facility that lies on 148 acres in Berkshire County, in northern New Marlborough. Its primary mission is supporting the restoration of lake trout populations in the Lower Great Lakes by supplying lake trout eggs to other

federal hatcheries and rearing native brook trout for stocking in local waterways to support recreational fishing and educational programs. They operate under the supervision of the USFWS and the Berkshire Hatchery Foundation to support the restoration of lake trout populations in the Lower Great Lakes by supplying lake trout eggs to other federal hatcheries. These eggs are hatched, grown and stocked into Lakes Ontario and Erie. The restoration efforts are part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. They produce upwards of 1.2 million fertilized Seneca lake wild strain lake trout every year. The conservation efforts both enhance the lake trout population and habitat, but also provide recreational fishing opportunities to anglers in the area. The hatchery contains a shop, a fish-rearing hatchery including ten circular pools, two raceways, and three ponds, trails for recreational use, an out-

reach pond, and visitor parking areas.

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

For those who want to hike every weekend year round, become a Hilltown Hiker member. People may

follow them on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Tees, hoodies, hats, patches, water bottles and safety vests will be for sale by donation at the event. People may see all their events, maps, blog and photos at www.hilltownhikers.com.

Hamilton Memorial Library lists April events

CHESTER – On Friday April 24 at 1 p.m. the program is birds of prey with Tom Ricardi, which will be held in the Chester Town Hall. Ricardi, a licensed rehabilitator and wildlife biologist, will present a special look into the lives of birds of prey such as eagles, owls and hawks. He will bring some of his birds for the presentation. This program is being sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

During school vacation week the library will hold a friendship bracelet making class on Tuesday April, 21 at 4 p.m. for boys and girls ages 7 plus. On Thursday, April 23 at 11 a.m. an intrinsic movement, special children's story time takes place. Guest Laurel Lenski will provide music, movement and lots of fun.

People should call the library at 413-354-7808 to register for these events.



DINING CAR

from page 1

Alexander acquired materials at cost and welding students at Gateway Regional School created the safety railings to line the platform. Alexander then installed the railing system, along with small ramps between the adjoining railroad cars and platform.

It was also a full circle event for Chad Willard of Red's Towing. As a little child, he had gone with his grandfather-owner of Harold's Garage in Northampton to bring the railroad boxcars and caboose onto the museum grounds. Years later, Willard owned Red's Towing and was hired to bring the dining car into the town of Chester, through the underpass, onto museum grounds and into place next to the station platform and behind the blue caboose.

"We wanted a dining car for years," Pierce said. "Most that we found were for sale for \$200,000. We got this for free, but had to pay professionals to move it."

Bernie's Dining Depot in Chicopee, long famous for its generous portions of

roast beef, closed in 2022. When the new owner decided to remove the historic dining car, the Chester Railway Station and Museum expressed interest and an agreement was reached. In a series of exquisite maneuvers, the 78,000 pound car was moved onto museum grounds at 10 Prospect St. on Dec. 22, where it waited for snow to disappear, trucks to be adjusted to the correct size and the towing company to return for the final steps.

The solution to moving the dining car the last fifteen feet was challenging due to limited space on the museum grounds. The plan, Willard said, was to put two rotators behind the car and a crane at the front. I-beams would be positioned under each end of the car, heavy-duty "sleeves" attached between the beams and stretcher bars above, and the car would be carefully lifted into place by the three pieces of equipment.

Positioning the first I-beam went smoothly at the front; the team used round stock to roll it into place and

the task went quickly. Things weren't as lucky in positioning the rear beam (weighing 800 pounds) and the team sent out for an additional piece of equipment leading to a pause in the action while waiting for a Bobcat to arrive.

Conversation broke out among the dozen or so onlookers as they waited. One unnamed woman said she was born in Chicopee and had eaten at Bernie's Dining Depot. She described herself as a worker bee for the museum, who helps cook at station events and has served on the Chester Foundation's Board, which serves the train museum, for 35 years. She was present when they moved the railway station across the tracks to its current location in 1990, when Conrail decided it didn't want it on their property.

She explained that the museum property also contains one of two roundhouses left in Massachusetts. It was used for the pusher engines required to get the train

over the mountain as it left Chester for Albany. It may someday be restored, but will require extensive repairs.

Talk soon turned to what the locals call the West-East Passenger Rail system (the state, of course, calls it the East-West system) which may again connect passenger rail service to Western Massachusetts for commuter needs and access to tourist locales. Foundation trustee Peter White and Pierce explained that the museum's station was three times the length of most railway stations of its age because it was a "long-stop" for the Boston-Albany Railroad. It originally contained a restaurant for passengers while the train refueled and, when traveling West, prepared to go over the mountain using the pusher engines. If the West-East Rail system comes to fruition with a stop in Chester, it will likely have a flag stop with a ticketing kiosk and passenger platform.

Pierce explained that a stop in Chester would

be practical for many reasons. The town is 25 miles from Pittsfield and 25 miles from Springfield, which is thought to be the ideal distance between train stops. The project's focus on tourism would be well-served in Chester, which is close to three National Historic Landmarks: the Keystone Arch Bridges, the Chester Railway Station Museum and the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

Pierce points out that National Historic Landmarks are a hard-to-achieve designation and include places like Mt. Rushmore. Most of the historic places in Western Massachusetts are National Historic Sites, a lesser distinction. Finally, the town has a live summer theater company and patrons could come in by train, grab a bite and see a show, all within walking distance of the train stop.

The Bobcat arrived and, with some extraordinary maneuvering, placed the rear I-beam under the dining car. Slings were attached and the

machines slowly began to lift the dining car to move it onto its trucks, with the car swaying gently with every inch. By 12:30 p.m. the dining car was securely in place and Red's equipment began packing up.

Willard said that there were no surprises and the project had gone smoothly, as planned. "Everybody seemed really happy," he said afterward.

Station treasurer Barbara Huntoon concurred. "A dining car has been on the Foundation's wish list for years and we're thrilled we got this one. And now it's finally and completely settled in its new home," she said. "The move was intense, such precision by Red's Towing."

Huntoon expressed gratitude to everyone who made it happen. "Our immediate plan is to have it available for people to sit in at Chester on Track on Saturday, May 16," she said. "Beyond that, it'll be available to rent for private parties. And who knows, maybe there will be a prime rib dinner at some point."

REGION

DCR offers Massachusetts Indigenous History children library

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation announced the start of the First Peoples First Stewards Children's Library, a new initiative available at nine DCR properties, designed to promote youth-focused written works by Native American authors.

Featuring more than 20 titles, the reading library program celebrates the region's Indigenous communities, histories and their enduring relationship to the lands and waters that make up the nearly half a million acres that DCR stewards across Massachusetts.

"Massachusetts' history began long before the arrival of colonists, with Indigenous communities who cared for

the land and continue to do so today. As stewards of this land, DCR has a responsibility to preserve and uplift the stories of our first and continuing stewards," said DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle. "By making this history accessible at DCR properties, we hope visitors gain a deeper understanding of what these lands represent -and the people who have been connected to them for generations."

"I am delighted visitors are being welcomed across Massachusetts with Indigenous-created books through DCR's First Peoples First Stewards Children's Library," said Traci Sorell, author and Cherokee Nation citizen. "I am honored some of my books are included

but especially heartened that creators from local Native Nations have titles provided too. Wado (thank you)."

In many Indigenous traditions, winter is a time when communities come together to tell stories and pass knowledge onto younger generations. This winter, the First Peoples First Stewards Partnership Program invites the public to nine visitor centers at parks and watersheds throughout Massachusetts to have an experience grounded in that tradition. Each library will feature works of fiction and non-fiction depicting accurate, first-hand accounts of Indigenous history, culture and lived experience, available for reading on site.

Visitors will be able to peruse titles in the new read-

ing libraries and sit with their family members to enjoy stories in the following visitor centers: Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge; Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester; Blue Hills Reservation in Milton; Borderland State Park in North Easton; Breakheart Reservation in Saugus; Fall River Heritage State Park; Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls; Mount Greylock State Reservation in Lanesborough and the Quabbin Reservoir in Belchertown.

The reading library locations were intentionally chosen to provide experiences across various geographical areas of the state. FPFS will continue to evaluate other

potential sites for additional libraries at DCR properties.

"Developing the First Peoples First Stewards Children's Library for DCR visitor centers is a project that has brought me joy and is near and dear to my heart. As a former educator specializing in Indigenous content, it is vital that the Indigenous visitors see themselves represented at DCR properties, and that non-Indigenous visitors can be introduced to Indigenous literature and experience in a matter of minutes an Indigenous perspective on life, the environment and community," said DCR Indigenous People's Partnership Coordinator Leah Hopkins and a citizen of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. "The books in each

of the libraries tell both traditional and contemporary stories and not only represent local Indigenous voices but also stories from other parts of Turtle Island (North America). They all share common themes of community, resilience and connection to the land-concepts we can all connect to."

The First Peoples First Stewards Children's Library represents an important step in FPFS and DCR's ongoing commitment to promote and provide space for public dialogue on Indigenous experiences in a way that is respectful and interactive. The books provided at each location were thoughtfully curated to ensure accurate, first-person representations of Indigenous culture, history and stories.



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PITTSFIELD



BAA to host College Fellowship Show

PITTSFIELD – The Berkshire Art Association honors exceptional student artists to the 2026 College Fellowship Show from now through Friday, April 24 at the Lichtenstein Center of Arts, 28 Renne Avenue.

The awards reception will take place Saturday, April 11 from 3-5 p.m. at the Lichtenstein Center of the Arts. Fellowship Awards have been made possible by a generous grant from the Feigenbaum Foundation and by individual donors.

Open to college art students from Berkshire County, enrolled in a visual art major anywhere in the country and students studying at Berkshire County colleges, the show was juried by a panel of artists representing several disciplines. Forty art works, created by 16 students, were selected for the show.

List of 2026 fellowship recipients are: Elizabeth Cheng,

Williams College; Zoe Coote, Simon's Rock at Bard College; Sergio Demo, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; Grace Espinosa, Williams College; Yasmine Faigle, Williams College; Gissel Gomez, Williams College; Keira Harder, Williams College; Olivia Jo, Williams College; Aidan Mack, Berkshire Community College; Katie Maier, Williams College; Lio Otter, Williams College; Mishal Powers, Williams College; Daisy Rogers, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; Shriya Sharma, Williams College; Jian Su, Williams College and Stephanie Trotto, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

The Berkshire Art Association's mission is to connect artists and the community to inspire creativity and increase access to the visual arts. People may visit berkshireartassociation.org for more information.

BECKET

Art workshops and show celebrate rivers

The Nature Conservancy and The Wild and Scenic Westfield River Committee teamed up to celebrate river connections, honor successes and face the challenges as part of a global community.

Nuno Felting workshops
Nuno Felting workshops will be held on Saturday, April 25 in Becket and on Saturday, May 2 in Chesterfield.

River segment scarves
The river segment scarves, created in the workshops with fabric Artist/designer Marjolaine Arsenault over the next three months, will be on display at the Becket Art Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, Becket from Saturday, May 16 to Sunday, June 7.

World Fish Migration Day

World Fish Migration Day is a global awareness campaign to highlight the connections that migratory fishes have with human and non-human species, lands, and waters. This day is marked by celebrations, events, and action campaigns. It serves as a global reminder of the ecological importance of migratory fish and the need to protect the rivers, streams, and habitats they depend on to complete their life cycles.

Participating not only in a local art show but contributing to a global art show celebrating our connection to rivers and fish through art. People may email westfieldriver@gmail.com for more information.



Submitted photo

Master Gardner will speak about pollinator gardens on April 25.

Becket Art Center list upcoming event

BECKET –The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, offers its weekly all-levels yoga class with Rima Sala on Thursday, April 16, 23 and 30 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$5 to \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. For more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

The Becket Arts Center will present a talk by Cornell Master Gardner Chris Ferrero on creating a pol-

linator paradise in a home landscape on Saturday, April 25 from 10-11:30 a.m. Ferrero regularly consults on designing pollinator gardens with native perennials and flowering shrubs and has designed gardens that are recognized by Pollinator Pathways and the National Wildlife Federation. Fee is \$10 and \$5 for members. People may visit becketartscenter.org for registration or more information.



HUNTINGTON

SELECT BOARD

from page 1

matter. An engineering study and raw data count from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission supports this decision. Chair Roger Booth will draft the cover letter for the application, which was pursued after several incidents of heavy equipment going off the road.

PVPC's Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion Study Summary makes a strong case for the state approving the ban. A traffic study on the road from October 2025 saw an average of 1,500 to 1,600 vehicles traveling County road each day, with 14% of vehicles being "axle class" (trucks). Under state guidelines, at least 5% of vehicles traveling a roadway must be axle class for an exclusion to be considered by the state.

The report also met the state's criteria showing repeated heavy loads resulting in deterioration of the road's edges, surface and culverts. Steep elevation and sharp turns at Harlow Clark Road and at the junction with Route 112 further press the need for the ban. Exempt from the exclusion would be vehicles used for construction, maintenance or repair, delivering or collecting goods and materials, public utility trucks or public service vehicles such as ambulances and school buses.

Next, Frank Pero joined Kowal in a discussion about unregistered vehicles on the property at 32 Russell Road. Pero confirmed that a Jeep has been removed from the property and two buses are still there. Pero said he continues to work on this and it will be cleaned up. Booth thanked him for continuing to move forward. When Peloquin asked when they wanted another update, Booth said they would meet again if they get more complaints or if progress stops. "I'm pretty confident that he's still working on the matter," Kowal said.

The board also met

with Erica Wells from Hilltowns Care about plans for this year's community garden, located on the grounds of the former Murrayfield Elementary School. Wells would like to expand to add a couple of picnic tables and a play space at the garden. After discussion, it was agreed that 15 additional feet (measured from the farthest garden box toward the back of the lot) would be earmarked for the expansion.

This motion was unanimously approved. In addition, the town is also creating a use form for events taking place on the rest of the plot. The community events committee and fire department use the back corner, for example, for the bonfire at the annual Trunk or Treat event near Halloween. A Murrayfield Use Request form for the 9 East Main St. property will soon be finalized and should be used by groups wishing to use the property for events.

In other business, Peloquin shared the election warrant, which includes open positions in town and one ballot question for a debt exclusion for a new fire engine. If this passes on the ballot it also has to get voted on at town meeting. Booth and board members Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh approved and signed seven copies of the warrant for posting.

Eric Jensen was appointed to the post of Constable through June 30. This position is on the ballot but, in the meantime, they need a constable for the election.

An IT Services RFP is out and proposals are due on Tuesday, April 14 at 2 p.m. Booth will join Peloquin in reviewing and scoring the proposals.

Town Accountant



Erica Wells

Richard Boulay has been working on reconciling town accounts and there have been issues with these not lining up. Boulay thinks it is due to uncashed checks but board members noticed that the variance fluctuates. "Those are not little numbers. Those are not checks being missed," said Booth. "That's money not being moved or not in the right accounts. We need to have it fixed before we go to Vadar."

Huntington will soon move to the new accounting software system, Vadar and the accounts need to be reconciled before that happens. Departments are reporting that their accounts are not right and that items have been charged to the wrong line. Hathaway agreed with Booth, saying he didn't want to spend the money, but the accounts have got to be fixed. The board unanimously voted to hire Eric A. Kinsert CPA, LLC, to be funded through the audit expense account.

Peloquin announced that FY '27 Reappointments list is not yet complete but that Sue Fopiano and Michael Brennan's terms expire June 30. As the Collector and Assistant Collector are critical positions, the board unanimously voted to reappoint Fopiano and Brennan to new three year terms.

Linda Hamlin, Jeff Penn and Karon Hathaway were all approved to serve on the town's new Visioning Committee. This was done using two motions so that Bill Hathaway could abstain from the vote on his wife Karon, and still support the other two volunteers.

The Board also started working on the Memorial Day Parade, a replacement computer for the Building Commissioner and forming a Cable Advisory Committee for the future.

Do-Re-Mi Singers to perform April 22 at Council on Aging

HUNTINGTON – The Council on Aging hosts a special spring celebration on Wednesday, April 22 at 1:30 p.m. in Stanton Hall with the Do-Re-Mi Singers.

This choral group with

25 plus members performed at the Eastern States Fair grounds and many sites throughout the area. People can relax with a free snack and take in sweet sounds with the power of the

seniors behind it. This event has no fees and is for all ages from any community.

Stanton Hall is ADA accessible. Parking is free. Donations are accepted.

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

School Committee hears Barr Foundation projects

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – At the Monday, April 6 meeting of the Gateway Regional School Committee, members heard updates from Dr. William Sullivan, principal of Gateway Regional School, on progress coming out of work funded through the Barr Foundation Grant.

This year's funding through the foundation totaled \$170,000 with a focus on redesigning the high school experience. One of the outcomes this year was working with input from students, staff, administrators and school committee members on a list of skills and character traits that "we want our graduates to carry into the world with them," Sullivan said.

They pared down a prior model called "10 habits of a Gator" into six traits, which then went out to families, local colleges and businesses for feedback and honing. Currently, the "Portrait of a Gator" traits are collaborative, knowledgeable, perseverant, leader, service-minded and communicator.

By the end of this year, they hope to develop criteria for mastery by students in grades 6 – 12 and a plan for sharing those with stakeholder groups. By 2029, they expect to bring these skills to the elementary level; create mastery criteria for grades K – 5; embed instruction to

support students to achieve mastery across all grades and embed POG competencies in related arts, extracurriculars and internships.

Sullivan gave a second presentation that looked back on all of the accomplishments during the first three years of Barr Foundation funding and on the goals for a second grant that, if funded, will cover work from September 2026 to June 2029. To date, teams of Gateway staff, students and parents have visited schools around the country that are also working with the Barr Foundation to re-envision education.

They have created a district instructional vision that has GSR focused on real world problem-solving and the elementary students focused on owning their learning. They have also expanded student opportunities through career fairs, college visits and school tours.

The vision includes "shifting the lift" that has students doing more of the active thinking in the classroom than the staff. GSR is also combining Honors and College Prep courses together, which frees up staff to offer more electives to students. Students who complete "extended studies" in those classes, which is self-directed extra work such as deeper reading, a paper, or a discussion will earn honors credit on their transcript. Support for extended studies will be provided by their teachers

from Tuesday through Thursday during the daily advisory NEST block.

School committee members had a number of questions and suggestions about both presentations and offered input on the current definitions of the POG traits. The discussion was detailed and lengthy with Sullivan keeping notes of their ideas.

In speaking to a new component where students will present their learning to a small panel of staff, Peter DeGregorio of Montgomery said, "This is aspirational. You won't grade kids on this, right?"

Sullivan answered that students wouldn't receive a grade, but there will have to be a way to measure whether or not each student has met these as graduation requirements.

Matarazzo said she hoped that all who have chafed against a test-based accountability system that measures students using one test in one moment in April see the value of this work and said there is a body of research about how to do this.

The superintendent also welcomed Jennifer Pappas as a new school committee member representing Russell, Another agenda item was Matarazzo reporting on her



Dr. William Sullivan

"It's a lot of learning. How to be in another country without your parents,"

Spanish teacher Alexis Batra

first year entry plan, part of her mentored work as a first year superintendent. This process led to her understanding the community and schools, and identifying Gateway's strengths and challenges. Next steps include a strategic planning process to identify goals for the next three to five years including measures of success, strategies to achieve this and planning and monitoring.

Following a presentation by Spanish teacher Alexis Batra, the Committee approved a school trip to Costa Rica in 2028. Gateway alternates these trips between Spain and Costa Rica. This will be for students in grades 10-12 and no Spanish experience is required to attend. The price of \$3,899 is already locked in and can be covered in 22 monthly payments of \$173. This covers air fare, hotels, three meals a day, a dedicated tour guide, bus and driver and all excursions, tours and entry fees.

"It's a lot of learning," Batra said. "How to be in another country without your parents." Batra said that a

recent graduate who had taken the trip as a Gateway student was now attending college in Madrid. Another Spanish II student will do a semester abroad next year in Spain.

The committee also approved its slate of annual motions including taking part in the National School Lunch Program, approving student activities accounts, authorizing the treasurer to incur temporary debt, and school choice among others for FY '27. The last day of school will be June 22 for elementary schools and June 23 for Gateway Regional School.

The committee unanimously approved several donations and grants including a \$650 Power of Poetry Scholarship for admission to the Emily Dickinson Museum; a \$25,200 Open Sci Ed Grant for kits and training for grade 6-8 teachers over the next three years and a \$50 donation to the Class of 2027 from Paula and Frederick Hepburn.

Student representative Theo DeAngelis-Page gave an update on student activi-

ties throughout the district. One of his highlights included the AP English class reading "A Thousand Splendid Suns" by Khaled Hosseini, which was followed by a visit from Shane Hammond who has worked to reform the post-secondary education system in Kabul. "Personally, it was an amazing experience to hear from somebody who visited and stayed in Kabul, a city we extensively analyzed through literature," DeAngelis-Page said.

Committee legislative liaison and Chester Selectman Brian Forgue gave updates on Rural School Aid, which included a possible earmark in the supplementary budget for the current fiscal year. If approved, this would have to be spent by the end of the fiscal year. A number of state legislators are working on increasing the FY '27 RSA allocation statewide.

Finally, Jason Perrone, Independent candidate for State Representative, was introduced. He attended Gateway Middle School before moving to Southwick for high school. He served in the Air Force and is about to retire from a 29-year career as a police officer. "I am very much in support of Rural School Aid, having attended a rural school district myself in Southwick," he said. Perrone is running for the state representative seat currently held by Nick Boldyga.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Middle School lists third quarter honor roll

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional Middle School announces the third quarter honor roll.

Seventh grade academic excellence

Seventh grade students making academic excellence are Brennan Bigda, Zoe Buell, Julian Carrasquillo, Savannah Chicoine, Hannah Chilson, Trevor Christenson, Patrik Corduff, Brooklyn Desrochers, Emma Dybacki, Adriana Fini, Mason Galenski, Connor Graham, Gunnar Gribi, Benjamin Haughey, Alice Hearn, Ryleigh Hurley, Eli Hutchison, Kendall Jarosz, Ishmael Jeffords, Carey Jilson, Adalyn Johnson, Michael Kraus, Brooke Labrie, Miya Lambert, Aubrey Leary, Violet Letendre, Lucas Maak, Maisie Mahoney, Eleanor Maynard, Nolan Merriam, Zachary Moylan, Kennedy Mulvaney, Claire Musa, Tessa Neill, Olivia Patruno, Avery Proulx, Kaleigh Rida, Elliot Scully-Henry, Louisiana Sinopoli, Rory Snape, Taylor St. Pierre, Stella Tremblay, Brycen Tylek, Nora White, Audrina Whittaker, Allison Woz, Sage Zimora and Ryan Zononi.

Seventh grade academic achievement

Seventh grade students making academic achievement are Emma Assan, Vincent Black, Nathaniel Bouffard-Broadhurst, Autumn Coon-Drawe, Enzo Daniele, Jaice Ellinger, Keegan

Farrell, Hayden Gamache, Riley Hogan, Julia Meehan, Penelope Murray, Jacob Nadolski, David Nuttelman, Desmond O'Sullivan, Rosalie Punska, Saige Reynolds, Addison Reyor, Logan Schmitter, Liam Schnell, John Tisdell and Ashlynn Ulrich.

Eighth grade academic excellence

Eighth grade students making academic excellence are James Clemeno, Sunali Driver, Stephen Estelle, Caleb Falkowski, Riley Fisher, Patricia Gagne, Lorelei Gilman, Anna Huard, Aubrielle Jarrett, Corbin Liimatainen, Aurora Loud, Tyler Menard, Camilo Ocampo, Mariah Pacinella, Gianluca Pica-Smith, Claire Pickard, Olivia Pignatere, Madison Rida, Ashtyn St. Martin, Georgia Sugrue, Phoebe Todd, Cyrus Tomsovic, Lucy Trombley, Addyson White, Eli Willard, Cooper Williams and Bradley Woods.

Eighth grade academic achievement

Eighth grade students making academic achievement are Max Bonham, Ivy Cardoza, Liam Dahill, Aoife Farrel, Joseph Gagne, Dylan-Joy Hocking, Sienna Kalmakis, Abrahm Kellogg, Summer Kohl, Dorothy Li, Lukas Manley, Samuel Monette, Samantha Moreau, Bibi Nabut, Scarlett Parent, Emilee Peart, Madeline Soares, Thomas Sullivan and Colm Wilson.

Gateway hosted first Career Day April 7

HUNTINGTON – "Our first Career Day was an incredible success," said Gateway Regional School Principal William Sullivan.

"It was inspiring to see our students connect with local community members and learn firsthand about the careers that help make our community strong, vibrant and full of opportunity."

Gateway Regional ninth and tenth grade students met with people from a wide range of careers at the school's Career Day on the morning of Tuesday, April 7. Each student was able to select and attend three 20-minute sessions with the presenters.

Kelly Sudnick, who is a Gateway alumna, explained types of community and public health nursing careers, training required and potential earnings. Before returning to Gateway as its Nurse Leader, Sudnick was deployed for a tour in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom as an Individual Augmentee, which occurs when the Army doesn't have enough troops and borrows personnel from other military branches. She served on a Medical Embedded Training Team as the medical surgical nurse mentor to the Afghan National Army. She was embedded with Afghan soldiers in Kabul and was also responsible for managing a team of local national interpreters.

Alumnus Kelly Pease is



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

District Nurse Leader (and alumna) Kelly Sudnick spoke with ninth and tenth graders at Gateway Regional School about how to qualify for a career and the day-to-day life of a nurse, at the school's Career Fair held on Tuesday, April 7.

currently a Massachusetts State Representative for Westfield and Southampton, but also covered his prior work experience as a child actor before joining the U.S. Army after graduating from Gateway, where he had a 20 year career in military intelligence. Pease earned a Bachelor's Degree in political science at Westfield State University and a Master's Degree from the School of Law at Western New England University. He worked for the Veteran's Administration before becoming a Legislative Aide for State Senator Donald Humason, eventually running for State Representative in 2020. In his presentation to students, he explained the branches of state government, the process of passing laws, the state's committee structure, how the state budget is formulated and serving the needs of constituents.

"The army worked for me. I travelled all over the place and was in Kuwait when 9/11 happened," Pease said. "What's key is finding what you love doing."

Gateway alumnus Isaiah Solitario is working in a career that he prepared for at Gateway. He currently

serves as a water treatment operator for the towns of Chester and Huntington and graduated having completed his required coursework at the high school. After sitting for his state licensing exam, he qualified and has worked for the past three-four years. Solitario said that Gateway isn't currently offering the water operators training, but thinks they plan to resume it when enough students sign up.

Students appeared very engaged while speaking with the presenters. Tenth grader Matthew Douglas of Huntington said he was finding the event helpful. "You get to see what life is like for people in that career and how they got there," he said.

Connor Bryant has his sights set on majoring in computer science and minoring in psychology. He hopes to use technology to create tools to address mental health issues and other challenges, such as creating computers that speak for people who are non-verbal.

Social Studies teacher Alexandra Jennings organized the event, with a goal of exposing students to different career fields and understanding what it takes to qualify. She said that

offering this to ninth and tenth graders helps them approach their junior and senior year with a better sense of career opportunities and a better readiness to make post-graduate decisions, such as professional training, military, or college pursuits.

Also presenting were Alyssa Leonard (marketing), Justin Green (police officer), Orlando Huertas (Massachusetts State Police trooper), Bryan Amaral (Army recruiter), Steve Knachel (radio host, WAQY 102), Andrew Alward (Chester Town Administrator), Christy Hoffman (psychologist), Jennifer Pappas (alumna, nurse and full time nursing professor at WSU), Nicholas Perry (diesel technician, fire department Lieutenant and handler/trainer for K-9 search and rescue), Alicia Hansen (librarian) and Josh Stebbins (financial advisor).

Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo said, "We were delighted to welcome a diverse group of local residents and alumni to introduce what's possible in the future to our students." "We appreciate the Gateway community supporting our students."

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NORTHAMPTON

Florence Community Band performs April 19 at NHS

NORTHAMPTON – The Florence Community Band's 25th Anniversary will be an unforgettable musical experience on Sunday, April 19 at 2 p.m. at Northampton High School, 380 Elm St.

Florence Community Band is thrilled to present our much-anticipated 25th Anniversary Concert, entitled "Music for a Silver Celebration." This event promises to be an afternoon filled with fun performances and vibrant energy.

The band will play the following favorite band tunes: "Pop and

Rock Legends: Chicago," "An American in Paris," "American Riversongs," "Tiger Rag" and "The Lion King."

Tickets for this anniversary event are free and audience members are encouraged to bring along a canned food item to donate. "We're beyond excited to celebrate 25 years of the Florence Community Band and our connection with the Pioneer Valley community," said Band Director Priscilla Ross. "It's going to be an incredible afternoon filled with music, energy, and unforgettable

moments. We can't wait to see everyone there."

For more information about the concert, people may visit Florence Community Band on Facebook. Don't miss out on what's sure to be a fun afternoon of music and memories.

Florence Community Band has long-standing roots in the Pioneer Valley and has an active playing membership of 75 musicians. With a commitment to community and musical excellence, FCB continues to grow and flourish as a welcoming place for all.

Freedom Credit Union announces April Month of Giving charity

SPRINGFIELD – Freedom Credit Union announce its April "Month of Giving" campaign will benefit Griffin's Friends, a local non-profit that supports children with cancer and their families.

Donations will be collected at all Freedom Credit Union branch locations throughout April. Community members are invited to stop in and contribute, with all funds directly supporting Griffin's Friends and its programs.

"Supporting organizations like Griffin's Friends is an important part of who we are," said Glenn Welch, president of Freedom Credit

Union. "We encourage anyone in the community to visit a branch and help make a difference for local families."

Griffin's Friends provides experiences and services that bring comfort and support during treatment. These include holiday parties, outings and summer events as well as massage therapy to promote relaxation. The organization also supplies Baystate Children's Hospital and its outpatient Oncology and Hematology Clinic with toys, crafts and other recreational resources, and funds a program coordinator dedicated to enhancing

patient activities.

Donations can be made at any Freedom Credit Union branch throughout April.

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

Hosmer Gallery hosts 'Bits and Pieces: the Fibeistas'

NORTHAMPTON – Forbes Library, 20 West St., present "Bits and Pieces: the Fibeistas" at the library's Hosmer Gallery April 2 through Wednesday, April 29.

This is a group show by Sally Dillon, Rebecca Fricke, Barbara Kline Martha May, Martha Robinson, Flo Rosemstock, Margaret Stancer, Eileen Travis and

Nancy Young. A reception will held on Saturday, April 18 from 1-4 p.m. The Hosmer Gallery is located on the second floor of the library and is accessible by stairs or elevator. Gallery hours are Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and closed Sunday and holidays.

Alexa Pascucci receives Spotlight Award

NORTHAMPTON – Northwestern Assistant District Attorney Alexa Pascucci was honored recently with the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association Spotlight Award at the organization's 30th Annual Prosecutors Conference in Boston.

Pascucci has served with the Northwestern District Attorney's Office since September 2018 and has been the attorney in charge of Eastern Hampshire District Court in Belchertown since

September 2022. She is widely recognized as a dedicated and detail-oriented prosecutor who approaches her work with both professionalism and compassion for victims.

In her leadership role, Pascucci oversees one of the office's busiest courts, where she is known for mentoring newer ADAs and legal interns. Her guidance and support have helped strengthen the next generation of prosecutors while ensuring high-quality representation in the courtroom.

Pascucci also played a key role in designing and implementing the office's Adult Diversion Program, which she continues to oversee. The program provides young adults with no prior criminal record an opportunity to avoid a criminal record by engaging in education and rehabilitative programming. In addition, she serves as the designated ADA overseeing the office's restorative justice initiative for Hampshire County.

Pascucci was selected

for the Spotlight Award in recognition of her outstanding service, leadership, and commitment to justice. The award is presented annually by the MDAA to one prosecutor in each county who exemplifies professionalism, dedication, and excellence in their work. The MDAA is an independent state agency that supports the Commonwealth's 11 elected district attorneys, along with hundreds of prosecutors and victim witness advocates across the state.

MONTEREY

Knox Trail programs to celebrate 250th anniversary set for April 16

MONTEREY – The Monterey Historical Society, Monterey Library and the Bidwell House Museum will hold two final programs to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Henry Knox's Noble Trail of Artillery through the Southern Berkshires.

On Thursday April 16 the Knox Trail 250th Anniversary walk and lec-

ture begins at the Bidwell House Museum, 100 Art School Road and the talk will be held at the Monterey Library, 452 Main Road. Admission to both programs is free.

Beginning in December of 1775 from Fort Ticonderoga in New York, twenty five year old Henry Knox led an expe-

dition to move 60 tons of captured British artillery to the Continental army in Boston in order to force the British to evacuate the city. Knox's journey took three months and came through the Berkshires in January of 1776, during the depths of winter, using little more than ox and horse-drawn sledges and manpower.

On Thursday April 16 at 7 p.m., people can attend the final talk in this series about the Knox Trail where Tom Ragusa will discuss how he has traced and marked the route of the old road for eight miles, and his effort to list the road on the National Register. This is the longest undisturbed stretch of the historic road in Western

Massachusetts. Tom Ragusa has spent almost twenty years researching and documenting the location of the old "Great Road" road through Sandisfield and Otis. This talk will be held at the Monterey Library and will also be available to watch on Zoom. To register, people may visit <https://www.bidwellhousemuseum.org/event/ye-trodden-path-2/>.

The exhibit and programs are sponsored in part by grants from Housatonic Heritage and the Friends of the Monterey Library. Both programs are free and open to the public. Parking for the Monterey Library is limited and visitors can also park in the public lot behind the Monterey Town Hall.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Williamsburg Planning Board Legal Notice

The Williamsburg Planning Board is herewith giving notice that it will hold a public hearing on **Monday, April 27, 2026 at 6:00PM** at the Town Office Building, 141 Main Street, Haydenville, MA. The hearing is to consider proposed changes to Zoning Bylaw Section 9.1 on the topic of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The changes are to align Williamsburg's zoning with Chapter 150, Section 7 and 8 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2024. These minor changes will clarify parking requirements and non-conforming lot situations to follow state law. The full text of the proposed changes will be available after April 10 in the Town Clerk's Office and on the town website www.burgy.org

Stephen Smith
Planning Board Chair
04/09, 04/16/2026

TOWN OF BLANDFORD PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter

40A, Section 5, the Blandford Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008 at **6:00 PM on April 24, 2026**. The purpose of this hearing is to present and discuss the proposed replacement of the Blandford Zoning Bylaws pertaining to Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) installations. The proposed new by-laws will include Section VIII 8.1 – 8.15 and Section XVI 16.1 – 16.13.

Section V111 - Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations

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

Applicability, 8.15 Waivers.

Section XVI – Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

16.1 Purpose and Intent, 16.2 Definitions, 16.3 Applicability and Permitting, 16.4 General Requirements, 16.5 Application Materials and Submittals, 16.6 Design, Site and Operational Standards, 16.7 Special Permit Criteria, 16.8 Decommissioning and Site Restoration, 16.9 Safety, 16.10 Severability, 16.11 Enforcement and Remedies, 16.12 Appeals, 16.13 Effective Date and Applicability.

Copies of the proposed By-law changes will be passed out at the hearing on April 24, 2026.

Greg Garfield, Chair
Blandford Planning Board
04/09, 04/16/2026

Town of Blandford Conservation Commission Legal Notice

At its regularly scheduled meeting on **Tuesday, April 28th, 2026 at 6:00 PM** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a Request for Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) to confirming

jurisdictional resource areas on North Blandford Road and 79 & 103 North Blandford Road in the Town of Blandford. The Commission will make its determination in accordance with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended).

Plans and additional information are on record in the Office of the Conservation Commission.

Richard Gates, Chair
Town of Blandford
Conservation Commission
04/16/2026

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.
HS26P0128EA
Estate of:
John Peter Peros
Also known as:
John Peros, John P. Peros
Date of Death: 12/26/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL

ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Michael M. Peros of Enfield, CT** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Michael M. Peros of Enfield, CT** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** in the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition 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 04/29/2026. 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 writ-**

ten 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 31, 2026
Mark S Ames,
Register of Probate
04/16/2026

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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Palmer, MA 01069
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DALTON

Dalton library offers Life Partner peer group

DALTON – The Dalton Free Public Library, 462 Main St., will offer a peer group for people of any age, who have lost a spouse or life partner and are seeking conversation and encouragement as they move forward. Upcoming

meetings include Saturdays, April 18 from 2-3 p.m., May 16 from 2-3 p.m. and June 27 from 2-3 p.m. For more information, people may email dalton@cwmmars.org or call 413-684-6112 and ask for Ellen or Janet.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Household Hazardous Waste Collection set for May 16

GREAT BARRINGTON – A Household Hazardous Waste Day Collection will take place Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Great Barrington Transfer Station.

For more information, people may call 413-243-5540 or visit www.tritown-helath.org. Registration is

required by visiting <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040448ADA728A1F49-62988957-hhwspring>.

The collection is open to residents of Alford, Becket, Egremont, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Richmond, Sandisfield,

Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington and West Stockbridge.

People should leave materials in the original container and tighten caps and lids. They should pack containers in sturdy, upright boxes. They should never mix chemicals and pack their vehicle and go directly

to the site.

No commercial waste latex paint, standard batteries, asbestos, fireworks or explosives, ammunition, construction debris, smoke detectors, propane or gas cylinders, radioactive material PCBs, fire extinguishers, electronics, medical sharps or medications.

STOCKBRIDGE

Berkshire Botanical Garden hosts ceramic exhibit

STOCKBRIDGE, – Clay becomes living form in “Grand Gesture: Monumental Vessels in the Garden” in an exhibition at Berkshire Botanical Garden, 5 West Stockbridge Road, from May 16 to October from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

The exhibition features the striking sculptures of Vermont-based ceramicist Stephen Procter. Placed throughout the Garden,

Procter’s works turn simple materials into forms that feel both grounded and expressive. A public reception will be held on Friday, May 15, from 5 -7 p.m.

Procter’s large vessels, some weighing up to 250 pounds and standing as tall as five feet, are both monumental and approachable, inviting reflection and a personal response. As physical objects,

they draw the eye and shape the spaces around them; as sculptures, they carry a calm, steady presence.

Reflecting on the meaning behind the exhibition’s title, Procter explains that a “grand gesture” goes beyond scale. “More important is the inspiration that motivates and justifies the scale. The animating impulse often includes some mixture of generosity, expan-

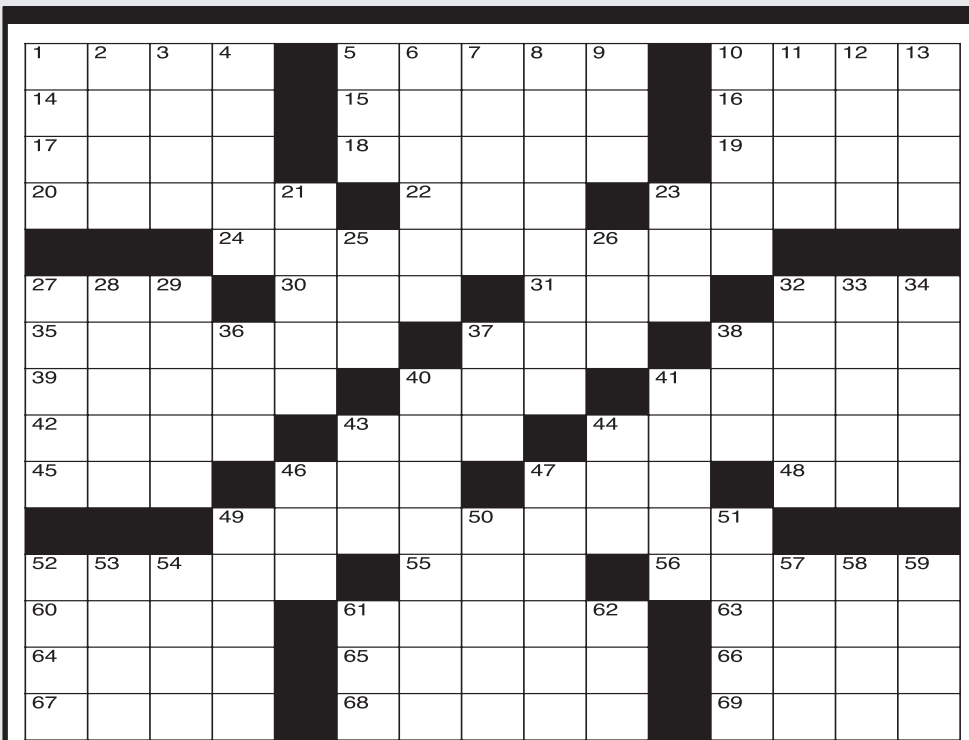
siveness, gratitude, compassion, awe, and love,” he says.

Set within the changing environment of the Garden, the works shift over time. “In the Garden, the vessels are constantly changing,” Procter notes. “The surfaces, even unglazed, subtly reflect light. Shadows of leaves play on them, they shine in rain ... and take on moss patina over time.” In addition to the

outdoor installation, smaller, classically inspired works by Procter will be on view in the Leonhardt Galleries.

Berkshire Botanical Garden is one of the oldest public display gardens in the Northeast. This not-for-profit, membership-supported educational organization encompasses 24 acres at the intersection of Routes 102 and 183 in Stockbridge. Open year-round

for classes, lectures, workshops and exhibitions, the Garden welcomes visitors to its display gardens daily from early April through Oct. 31, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Its mission is to provide information, education and inspiration concerning the science, art, and joy of gardening and its vital role in preserving the environment. For more information, people may visit BerkshireBotanical.org.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Greek goddess of marriage
- 5. Tropical American blue jay-like bird
- 10. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 14. Dark olive black
- 15. Light, crinkled fabric
- 16. Notre Dame has a golden one
- 17. Leaked blood
- 18. Confronted
- 19. Negligible amount
- 20. Facilitated
- 22. Hill or rocky peak
- 23. Minneapolis suburb
- 24. Songs to one's beloved
- 27. Brake horsepower
- 30. Angry
- 31. Children's game
- 32. Spelling is a type of one
- 35. Obtained in return for labor
- 37. Indicates center
- 38. Chinese dynasty
- 39. Old World buffaloes
- 40. Slang for time off

- 41. Fabric
- 42. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 43. Defunct regional economic organization
- 44. Philly footballers
- 45. Female sibling
- 46. Peter Griffin's daughter
- 47. Digital audiotape
- 48. Insecticide
- 49. Scientific instrument
- 52. Pages may be dog-__
- 55. Israeli city __ Aviv
- 56. Type of sword
- 60. Middle Eastern military title
- 61. Wise individuals
- 63. French Polynesian island
- 64. Popular shoe type
- 65. One of 50
- 66. Divulge a secret
- 67. Dish of cooked meat mixed with potatoes
- 68. Actress Zellweger
- 69. Romanian city

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Greek cupbearer of the Gods
- 2. Ancient Syrian city
- 3. Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- 4. Range of mountains
- 5. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- 6. Spoke
- 7. City in Georgia
- 8. Theatrical
- 9. CNN's founder
- 10. Icelandic poems
- 11. Bjorn __, tennis player
- 12. Bowfin genus
- 13. One point north of northeast
- 21. Political divisions in ancient Greece
- 23. Electroencephalograph
- 25. Cool!
- 26. Male parent
- 27. Where some gymnasts work
- 28. Capital of Vietnam
- 29. Sailboats
- 32. Shelter (Scottish)
- 33. Completed
- 34. Discharge
- 36. Arrest
- 37. Partner to cheese
- 38. Coffee receptacle
- 40. Stagnate
- 41. Satisfies
- 43. Snakelike fish
- 44. Consume food
- 46. Type of school
- 47. Erase
- 49. Inform
- 50. Girl's given name
- 51. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 52. Every one of two or more things
- 53. Northern India city
- 54. Seventeenth stars in a constellation
- 57. Weapon
- 58. Amounts of time
- 59. Isodor __, American Nobel physicist
- 61. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 62. Witness

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

You have a certain energy that is building. Momentum increases the second you stop overthinking, so jump into whatever you were planning to do with two feet.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Peace will look good on you this week, Cancer. You will be exuding quiet confidence. It is a good time to organize your space or schedule a spa session. Relax as stress levels drop.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

A random invite or chat leads to a helpful connection, Libra. Say yes to invitations to go out, as it is time to be a social butterfly for the foreseeable future.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, you are building something solid behind the scenes. It may take a lot of time, but steady effort now will likely lead to bragging rights.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Something cozy, such as a hobby, recipe or routine could turn into something surprisingly productive, Taurus. Don't dismiss passion projects this week when comfort meets opportunity.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

The spotlight is yours, Leo, even when you are not trying to be in it. This is a great week to share ideas, pitch something creative or post fun content on social media.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you are giving off quiet power vibes this week. Your focus and follow-through is all based on trusting your instincts. Someone in your circle is noticing your efforts.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Collaborations sparkle for you this week, Aquarius. All of those ideas that you think are unusual will turn out to be genius. It's all about perspective and looking at things the right way.

SAGITTARIUS

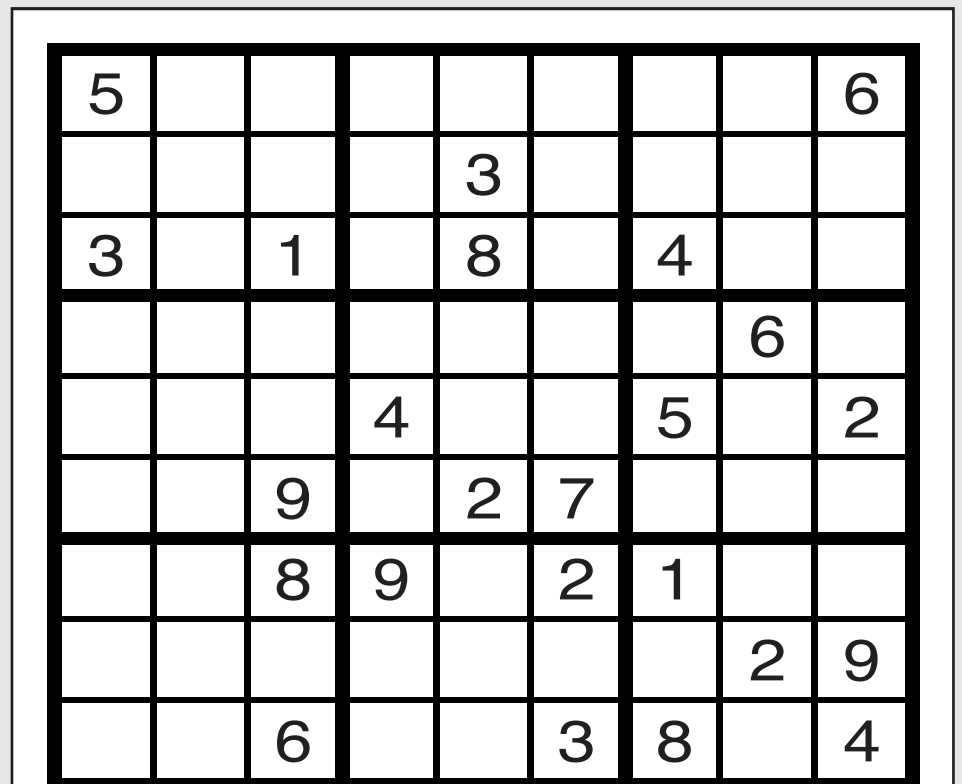
Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, going on an adventure doesn't have to necessarily mean traveling. This is a good time to try a new class, go to a show or experiment with new cuisine.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Your inner world could intersect with the outside world this week, Pisces. Expect a few days of creative, dreamy and intuitive moments where you daydream on purpose.



SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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

answers

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

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

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MISCELLANEOUS

ST. JUDE THANK YOU FOR answering my prayers. P.F.

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Start Date: Within the next few weeks to months
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Requirements: Applicants must be 21 or older and eligible to work in the United States. Background checks are required under state cannabis regulations.

Interested candidates should email holyokewilds9@gmail.com with their contact information and brief work history.

Holyoke Wilds is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

HELP WANTED

SEASONAL FACILITIES CREW wanted at Norcross Wildlife Foundation. For a full job description, please visit www.norcrosswildlife.org or email info@norcrosswildlife.org

The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a **part-time Program Assistant** for the Council on Aging. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the **Selectmen's Office, 215 Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535;** or by email to selectmen@northbrookfield.net.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and/or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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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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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Babcock Brook Falls at the Keystone Arch Bridges Trail in Chester is a popular waterfall to visit.



Goldmine Falls is located in Chester and a favorite spot of hikers.

Submitted photos

Hilltown Hikers trek to some waterfalls

Tis the season for tremendous waterfalls. When the snow melts and the spring rain comes, the Hilltowns Waterfalls really put on a show.

A great Sunday outing to enjoy with the whole family is a waterfall tour by car since so many waterfalls are

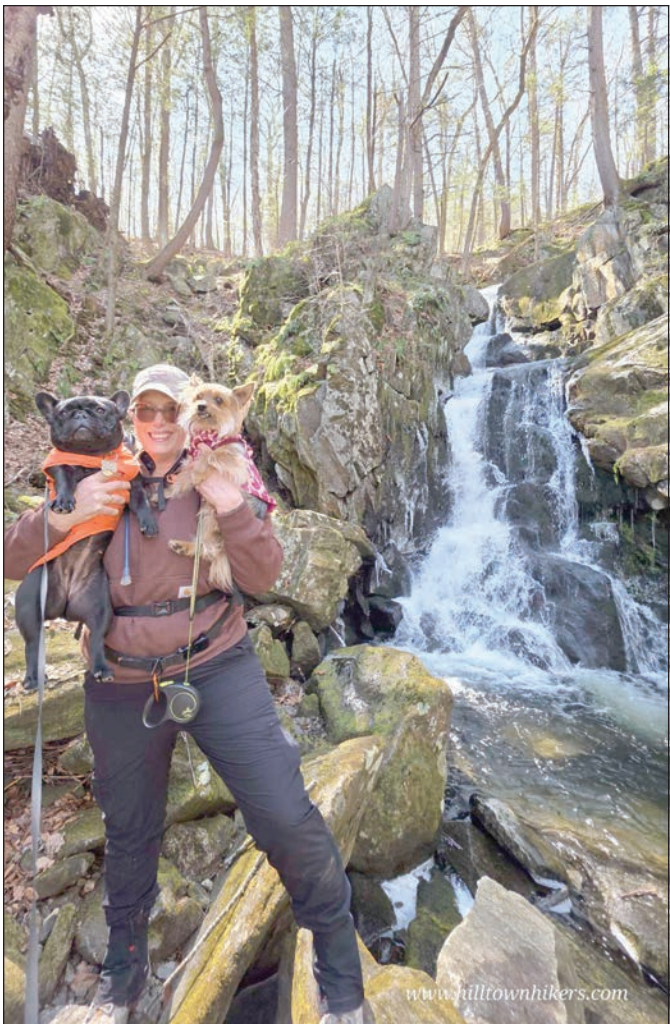
within a short distance of parking and easy to get to.

Some great books to check out with directions and waterfall ratings are "Berkshire Destinations" by Christy and Jan Butler, "Berkshire Region Waterfall Guide" by Russell Dunn, "Connecticut Waterfalls" by

Russell Dunn and Christy Butler and "New England Waterfalls" by Greg Parsons and Kate Watson.

Of course the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers website at www.hilltownhikers.com lists quite a few including the most popular Bash Bish Falls and

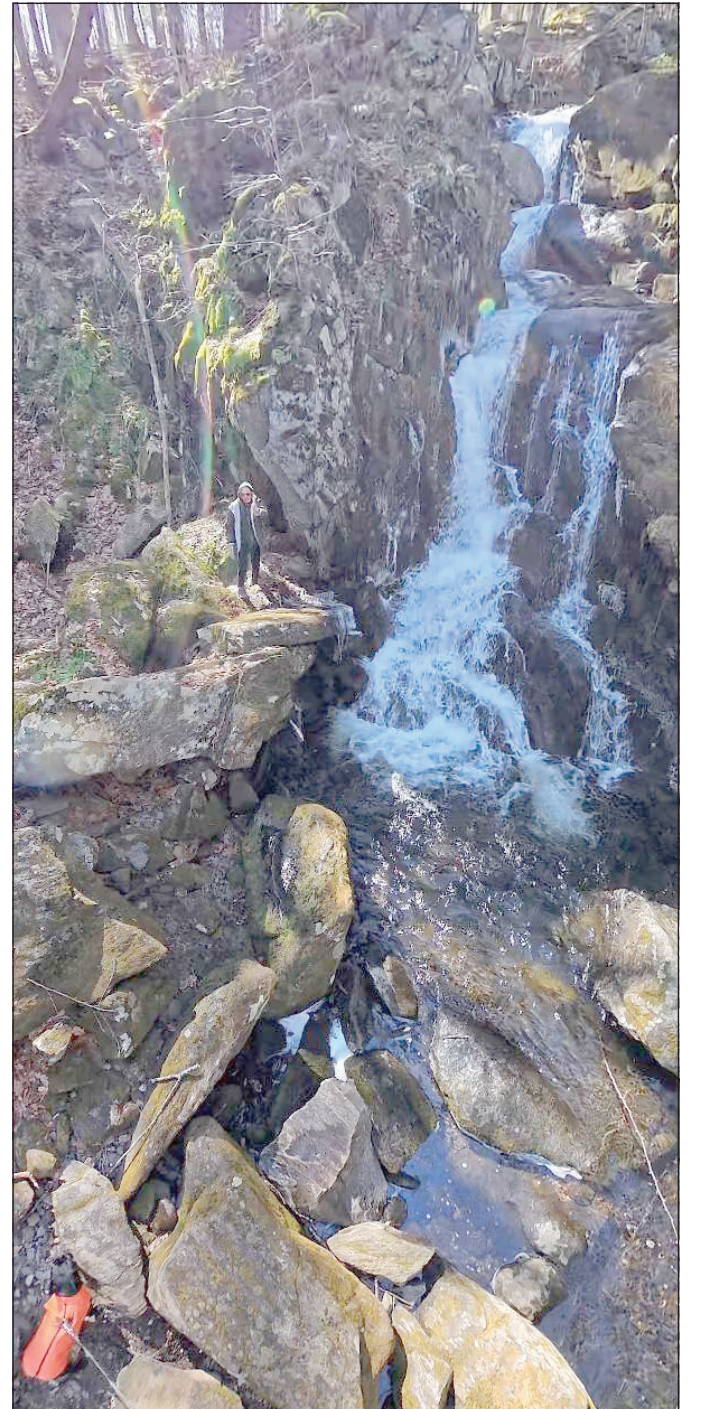
Tannery Falls. Some of the hikers favorites along the Jacobs Ladder Trail are Bradley Falls and Cascade on the Little River both in Worthington, Sanderson Brook Falls and Goldmine Falls in Chester and Pitcher Falls in Russell,



Stephanie at Lower Goldmine Falls holds Frankie and Cybill.



Butler Falls is located at the old Chester Campground.



Frankie, one of the canine Hilltown Hikers participant is at the bottom of Goldmine Falls.

Now Hiring! Advertising Sales Representative



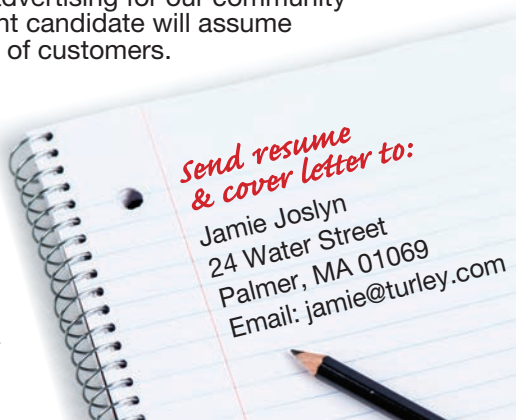
Do you want to work in your community helping local businesses connect with their customers?

Do you want a career supporting local journalism, which tells the unique stories of our communities?

If so, then join our team! Turley Publications is looking for an outgoing, energetic person interested in selling advertising for our community newspapers and supplements. The right candidate will assume an established territory with a portfolio of customers.

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

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



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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Class of **2026**

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION MAY 15th
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2x3 Black & White Grad Ad

Congratulations Karly Smith! We are so very proud of you and your accomplishments. Good luck at Springfield College!



Love, Mom & Dad