

"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." George Bernard Shaw

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

Gateway contingent testifies on the hill

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

A contingent of students, staff and administration from the Gateway Regional School District traveled to the Massachusetts State House in Boston on Monday, April 13 to testify before the joint Ways and Means Committee.

At issue: advocating for full Rural Aid funding in FY24. Students Jordyn Dubour, Salem Painter, Joey Pisani and Naraiyah Renaud joined high school math teacher Val Zeh, district library paraprofessional Karen Leis and Superintendent Kristen Smidy. This action was the latest in an effort to improve the financial and educational outlook for the district and its member towns.

Testifying before the committee were Pisani, Zeh and Smidy; each was allowed five minutes to speak.

In his testimony, Gateway junior Joey Pisani pointed out that the state's rainy day fund has billions of dollars, over half a billion is supposed to support education following passage of the Fair Share Amendment and \$1.5 billion will be spent over the next six years through the Student Opportunity Act of which rural schools will see less than 1%. Given these



Shown from left are Karen Leis, students Salem Painter, Naraiyah Renaud, Jordyn Dubour, State Representative and Gateway Regional alum Kelly Pease, Superintendent Kristen Smidy, student Joey Pisani and teacher Val Zeh. *Courtesy photo*

resources, there are "hundreds of thousands of students in rural areas who deserve to have the same opportunities as their Boston counterparts, there is no reason why Rural School Aid shouldn't be fully funded."

Pisani also pointed out that the House 1 budget's line of \$7.5 million for Rural

Aid only meets 12.5% of the Rural School's Commission recommendation of \$60 million. "I, as a student, would be failing a class if I only did 12.5%."

Superintendent Kristen Smidy outlined the realities for rural schools, saying that the aim of the Chapter 70 (education funding) formula

is to ensure all school districts have resources needed to provide an adequate education for all students. However, despite districts with declining enrollment being "held harmless," Gateway's Chapter 70 increase for FY24 is 0.4%. Chapter 70 funding cannot

TESTIFIES, page 3

HUNTINGTON

Board adopts age, dementia friendly community resolution

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Huntington Select board faced a full agenda for their Wednesday, April 12 meeting, which included becoming an age and dementia friendly community, a new required fee imposed for non-public ambulances and a dispute between a property owner and the planning board.

Age and dementia friendly

Council on Aging Chairperson Kathleen Peterson spoke about efforts underway to take a more regional look at trying to help communities in Hampden and Hampshire County become more "age and dementia friendly." Peterson already deploys some of the strategies using Title III funding from Highland Valley Elder Services including running a memory cafe and having a caregiver support person. Peterson is working with Becky Bash from the Pioneer Valley

RESOLUTION, page 5

BLANDFORD

Dirt road listening session held at senior center

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

As town seniors enjoyed spaghetti and meatballs, garlic bread, salad and desserts, two representatives from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission were present to listen to residents' concerns about dirt roads.

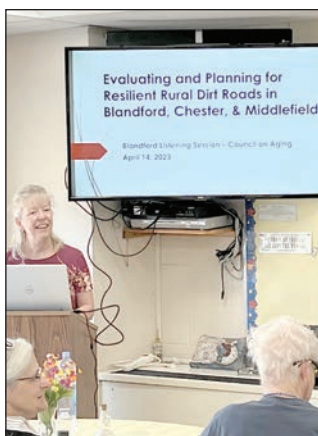
Chief Environment Planner Patty Gambarini made a power point presentation about the project and its importance and Senior Planner Erica Lerner fielded questions on Friday, April 14. Almost all of the town's

dirt roads were mentioned in one way or another, running the gamut from either having potholes, drainage issues, or only a one-way access. Roads mentioned included Blair, Gibbs, George Millard, Shepard, and Virgil Lloyd roads.

Those present had the opportunity to mark specific roads on maps provided, put dots or sticky notes on the maps with listed problems.

This was the first of two listening sessions for the Municipal Vulnerability

DIRT ROAD, page 7



PVPC Chief Environment Planner Patty Gambarini made a Power Point presentation.



Residents mark a map of the town with roads that have particular issues. Shown from left is Pamela Dirschka, George Reichert and PVPC Senior Planner Erica Lerner. *Photos by Mary Kronholm*



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HILLTOWNS

April highlighted as sexual assault awareness month

April is sexual assault awareness month and the Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force has some ideas for parents and guardians about how to talk to children about safety.

While many of us still think about strangers when we think about sexual assault, research tells us that as many as 90% of situations where a child is sexually harmed, the child and often their family knows the person, who has caused harm.

These suggestions for talking to your children are adapted from Stop It Now, a national organization that works to stop sexual abuse.

Model healthy boundaries

Sometimes we unintentionally confuse kids by insisting they hug a relative or friend, or by saying “Do whatever the babysitter tells you to do.” Help your children practice setting respectful boundaries. If they don’t want to hug a relative, help them say no politely or

help them find another way to greet their relative i.e. shaking hands, fist bump. Model saying “no thanks” or “I’d rather shake hands but I’m happy to see you.” If needed, step in and help your relatives understand that no disrespect is intended and that you are encouraging boundary setting for safety reasons.

Use concrete examples

For example, talk through with your child what they would do if they were at a friend’s house and a friend’s older sibling asked them to play a game that made them feel uncomfortable or weird, or involved physical contact. Make it clear that they can tell you or another trusted adult and that they won’t get in trouble for telling.

Talk about touch

Tell your children something like “It is not OK for anyone to touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable – even if it is someone you are close to

and care about, and even if you like the person. Your body is yours alone and you always have a right to say no.”

Explain about tricks

Explain that sometimes people use tricks or bribes to keep children from telling things. They might tell a child that the abuse is their fault, that no one will believe them or that if the child tells something bad will happen. Reassure your children that they can tell you anything, even if it already happened. Remind them that you will always be there to keep them safe, that some secrets should not be kept, and that if someone tricks them it is never their fault.

Involve other adults

Sometimes children find it easier to talk to other adults. Ask your child, “If you didn’t want to tell me something important, what other adult could you talk to?” Help them figure out who that

other adult would be. Reassure them that it would be okay with you if they told this other trusted adult and that your main concern is their safety.

Be approachable

By making it normal to have these kinds of conversations and by answering questions accurately and respectfully, you send the message that your child can talk to you – even if something has already happened.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to call the Child Witness Advocate at Hilltown Safety at Home, Patti McManamy, at 413-667-2203. As always, we want to thank the hilltown community for all you do to keep our community safe, healthy and strong.

Note: Lindsey Maxwell, Kim Savery, Monica Moran and Lisa Goding contributed to this column. Members Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force. southernhillsdvtaskforce@gmail.com.



HVA to hold celebrate free Watershed event May 26

The Housatonic Valley Association will hold a free event starting next month called Celebrate our Watershed with HVA.

From Friday, May 26 to Tuesday, July 4 HVA invites people of all ages to celebrate the Housatonic River Valley and help protect their waterways and lands by exploring the outdoors through friendly competition, attending one of HVA’s events or enjoying nature in their own way. There’s something for everyone including the chance to win exciting prizes from places like REI, Patagonia and more!

“This event is all about bringing people together to explore and celebrate the Housatonic River Valley from the Berkshires and eastern New York through western Connecticut to Long Island Sound. By getting out there and sharing your experiences online, whether it’s paddling your favorite stream or hiking a local land trust trail or photographing wildlife, you’ll be raising awareness about the how special this area is and why we’re all working so hard to protect it,” said Lynn Werner, HVA’s Executive director. “And best of all, it’s fun, free and open to everyone.”

MassDOT announces lane closures during daytime and nighttime hours

LEE/MONTGOMERY/RUSSELL/BECKET – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces it will be conducting pavement marking operations and bridge, guardrail and drainage repair work on I-90 eastbound and westbound in Lee, Montgomery, Russell and Becket. The scheduled work will require temporary lane and shoulder closures, and is scheduled to take place as follows:

In Lee, drainage repair operations in Lee will be conducted daily on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 10 Friday, April 21 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Bridge repair operations will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 8.3 through Friday, April 21, from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. the following morning. Work is anticipated to conclude on Friday, April 21 by 5 a.m.

In Montgomery and Russell pavement marking operations and bridge repair work will be conducted nightly on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 36.0 through Friday, April 21 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. the following morning. Work is anticipated to conclude on Friday, April 21 by 5 a.m.

In Becket guardrail repair operations will be conducted nightly on I-90 eastbound and westbound from mile marker 17 to mile marker 20 through Friday, April 21 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. the following morning. Work is anticipated

to conclude on Friday, April 21 by 5 a.m.

Bridge repair operations will be conducted nightly on I-90 eastbound and westbound from mile marker 17.3 on Monday, April 17, from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. the following morning.

The work will require temporary lane closures to allow crews to safely and efficiently conduct pavement marking work and bridge, guardrail and drainage repair operations.

Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work area.

Drivers who are traveling through the affected areas 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 Twitter @ MassDOT to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

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2nd Annual Help Clean Up Norwich Bridge Cemetery in Alice Richardson’s Memory

For many years past, the Norwich Bridge Cemetery was maintained and groomed by Alice Richardson and Rodney LaFond. In January 2022, Alice passed away.

In accordance with cemetery bylaws, a small committee will oversee the care and hopefully be able to maintain the grounds.

However, we need the help of the community. We are asking that those of you who are able, participate in the spring clean-up on

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023 8:00 AM - 12 NOON.

A neatly trimmed and presentable cemetery grounds were Alice’s legacy.

Please consider volunteering
a few hours of your time to help keep it that way.

HUNTINGTON

Hilltown Family Center offers six-week 'Me, You, We Program'

HUNTINGTON – The Hilltown Family Center, 9 Russell Road, will sponsor a free six-week playgroup to play and learn together.

Children will meet new friends and practice important social-emotional skills. This program is limited to the first ten Hilltown families who register. The "Me, You, We Program" begins on Fridays starting, April 28 during the regularly scheduled play-to-learn group from 10 a.m.-noon at the Hilltown Family Center. Families will receive a kit of hands-on materials created by the

Boston Children's Museum.

In 2022/2023 the museum received funding to share the "Me, You, We" resources with fifty-four CFCE sites across the state to do play groups with families. "Me, You, We" is designed to support children ages two to five and their caregivers in developing and practicing social-emotional skills.

Social and emotional development is how children learn to understand themselves, to connect to and behave with other people and to be independent and make good choices. This includes

skills such as understanding how they feel and naming it, managing big feelings and controlling their behavior, making sense of other people's feelings, finding ways to care about other people's feelings, working and playing nicely with other by following directions and taking turns and solving their own problems.

All adults are required to wear masks in the Family Center. To register for this program people should email Susan LeBarron, Hilltown Family Center Coordinator, at slebarron@hchcweb.org

or call 413-667-2203 extension 311.

The Hilltown Family Center is generously funded through a Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. The Center in Huntington houses many of the Hilltown Community Health Center's community programs and services, and offers an extensive list of resources for parents, caregivers and families. For more about the Hilltown Family Center, people may visit their Facebook page or HCHCweb.org.

TESTIFIES

from page 1

help rural districts like Gateway begin to address increases in fixed costs such as heating (up 10%), special education (14%), or vocational education (up 9%), never mind impacting the classroom. "Rural schools and towns are being put in the position to determine what to cut in order to keep basic operations afloat."

The answer, said Smidy, is to fully fund Rural School Aid. "There does not need to be a recalculation of formulas or a redistribution of funding away from my very deserving neighboring districts that did receive a 9, 10, 15 or even 20% increase to their Chapter 70 allocation when many districts like mine got the 0.4% increase," Smidy said.

She also said fully funding non-residential pupil transportation, regional transportation reimbursement and increasing charter school and special education reimbursement would go a long way to level the educational playing field in Massachusetts. Some might argue a relatively small number of districts would qualify for Rural School Aid. But Smidy pointed out, "In fact, even with the 25% increase to education funding through the Student Opportunity Act which was necessary and important, 56% of that funding is assigned to only 23 districts," Smidy said.

Rural School Aid came out of the release of a report in July 2022 entitled "A Sustainable Future for Rural Schools" by the Commission on the Fiscal Health of Rural School Districts. Spearheaded by State Representative Natalie Blais and former State Senator Adam Hinds, the report followed a year-long study by a commission of legislators, state offi-



Gateway teacher Val Zeh, student Joey Pisani, and Superintendent Kristen Smidy gave testimony on the need for Rural School Aid before the joint Ways and Means Committee on April 13.

Courtesy photo

cial, representatives of rural school districts, as well as organizations such as the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools and Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

Report findings were that rural schools cost more to operate, have fewer economic opportunities, incur greater transportation costs and have endured a higher degree of declining enrollment than typical districts. From 2012 - 2020, the report said, rural districts lost 13.9% of their enrollment, while the statewide decline was .5%. Gateway's decline was 23.7% for that same time period.

Recommendations were to substan-

tially increase funding for rural schools, revise the state funding formula to close the gap between state funding and actual costs, provide extraordinary relief monies to districts with over 20% of students qualifying for special education and to consider a cap on the number of students allowed to choose out of rural schools.

Testifying before the joint ways and means committee was the latest in a number of advocacy efforts on the part of the Gateway district for Rural Aid funding. In early March, district and town officials from Chester met with Senator Paul Mark; on March 28, Smidy organized a round-table discussion of parents,

staff, and school committee members with Mark and State Representative Nick Boldyga.

In the district's April 6 edition of "Gator Bites," a weekly e-newsletter, stakeholders were urged to write to members of the ways and means committee; seek support from state associations (such as the Mass Association of School Committees or the Mass Teachers Association); ask state officials to ensure that the monies raised by the Millionaire's Tax truly goes to support education; and asking friends and family members from non-rural districts to take these same actions to support fully funding Rural Aid.

In FY20, the Rural School Aid line in the state budget earmarked \$4 million for 67 districts that qualified. Governor Healy's budget allocates \$7.5 million and marks the first time a Governor's budget has had any funding in the line. However, both fall far short of the \$60 million called for in the Rural School Aid report, and-as years pass-that goal may already need to be adjusted for inflation.

But, as Smidy notes, "There should not be winners and losers when it comes to our students' future. Every student should be provided with programming and staffing that matches their needs without needing to school choice out to another district or pay for private school tuition."

Pisani concluded his remarks with this, "Gateway and rural schools from the Berkshires to Boston are here to stay and to close with the words of one of my favorite musical artists Lizzo, "It's about damn time" we fully fund them.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

Asparagus, a perennial favorite



When I was a kid, we had a big flower garden that ran the length of the gable end of our ranch house.

It was tremendous fun for mom and me each spring to mark the rows and sow the seeds of calendula, cleome, balsam and so many other interesting annual flowers.

Sometime in the mid to late 1980s, it became trendy to install perennial flower gardens. Under the guise of “less work,” lots of folks traded in their marigolds and zinnias in place of daylilies and summer phlox.

Where am I going with this, you ask? Straight to an article about asparagus.

Yes, asparagus. My favorite perennial vegetable.

The correlation came when I was working in my asparagus patch earlier today and I thought about just how much bang for the buck you get from established asparagus for such little annual labor.

In order to thrive, asparagus plants require full sun, fertile soil, a neutral pH, and a weed-free bed. If time allows, prepare the site in the fall prior to spring planting by removing the sod from grassy areas and by making the necessary adjustments to the soil with the addition of lime and balanced organic fertilizers.

A soil test will determine accurate amounts for your site.

Once asparagus crowns have been purchased you shouldn't wait too long to plant them, or they will dry out. At first look, the roots look like fleshy white tentacles of an octopus radiating out from its head!

If planting ASAP is unlikely store them in moist sphagnum moss until you are able to get them in the ground. New advice recommends planting the crowns in trenches 8- 10" deep.

It is helpful to incorporate additional lime and bone meal thoroughly into the bottom of the planting furrow. Set plants on small mounds of soil 12-18" apart in the row and cover with 2" of soil.

As the spears poke through this first layer of soil and begin to fern out, gradually fill in the trench with a mixture of soil and finished compost. It should take six weeks for the furrow to be completely filled in.

Water regularly and top-dress with fertilizer in August of the first year and every

spring thereafter. A thick application of compost at this time will also enhance fertility, while liming annually will help keep the pH neutral.

New studies indicate that spears can be harvested for a week-long period the year after planting. Simply cut with a sharp knife at the soil surface.

The following year expand your harvest to four weeks; by year three a full harvest season of eight weeks is possible.

After harvest let the foliage grow, once winter killed it can be cut back and removed from the garden site in case it harbors insect eggs. Good hygiene and hand picking will reduce populations of the asparagus beetle and other culprits of the asparagus patch.

What was I doing out in the asparagus patch today, you ask?

Besides thinking about flowers, I was weeding, and prepping the beds for their annual application of lime and compost. It's a fair trade-off for two months of harvesting one of my favorite vegetables!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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.

What can I earn in my first year collecting Social Security?



Dear Rusty: My 62 birthday is in late August of this year. I would like to start collecting Social Security, but after reading about the need to keep my earnings less than \$21,240 in the first year it doesn't seem fair to those who have birthdays later in the year. I will have earned a lot by the end of August. Or am I missing the part where the year starts from the day you retire? Or is it a fiscal year? Please elaborate?

Signed: Looking Ahead

Dear Looking Ahead:

Born in late August, your first month of eligibility for Social Security will be September (you must be 62 for an entire month to be eligible for SS benefits). If you start your benefits in September, for the months of September through December 2023 you'll have a monthly earnings limit of \$1,770. If you exceed that limit in any of those 4 months, you won't be eligible for SS

benefits in any month that the \$1770 monthly limit is exceeded. If you exceed the monthly limit in all of those months, you won't be entitled to any benefits in 2023, unless using the annual earnings limit formula to determine your penalty would result in a lesser amount.

The penalty for exceeding the annual limit is \$1 for every \$2 you are over the 2023 limit and, if using that formula yields a penalty which is less than for exceeding the 2023 monthly limit for September – December, they will use the annual limit instead of the monthly limit to compute your penalty. Thus, your annual earnings earned before September will only count if using the annual limit will result in less of a penalty than using the monthly limit for the months after your benefits start. If you plan to retire from working before September, then there will be no penalty for exceeding the annual earnings limit prior to that, but if you continue to work full time there will likely be a penalty which will cause Social Security to take away some of your benefits.

Starting in 2024, only the annual earnings limit, which will be a bit more than the 2023 annual limit, will apply to you. Generally, if you continue working full time and will significantly exceed the annual earnings limit,

it may be wise to reconsider claiming your Social Security until your income is below or closer to the annual limit each year, or until you reach your full retirement age after which the earnings limit no longer applies. And if you do claim early and exceed the earnings limit, and if you have benefits taken away for some number of months to satisfy the penalty, you'll get time-credit for those months after you reach your full retirement age. That credit will, essentially, move your claim date forward by the number of months you didn't get SS benefits, increasing your benefit amount accordingly after your full retirement age.

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Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



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Country Journal TEAM



EDITOR
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Theresa Wegiel
twegiel@turley.com

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Great blue herons are back. After writing in the previous column about an email from a Hardwick resident about a heron rookery, I received two other emails about rookeries in their area. A couple who read the Journal Register enjoy watching the rookery at Conant Brook Dam in Monson. They said there were about four or five nests being used.

A Brimfield resident also sent an email about the Conant Brook Dam in Monson. He said there are about six nests. Last year all of the nests fledged young.

He said the rookery is easy to find and it is accessible from the a parking lot off of Munn Road in Monson. On Google maps it is listed at the Conant Brook Dam/Munn Dike Trailhead. From the parking lot walk about a quarter mile through the field and then take a right to the water.

He said, "The nest are spread out and sometimes it takes a bit to find all six because of all of the dead tree trunks



Great blue heron

standing in the water."

I have a pair of great blue herons nesting in the beaver pond, which borders my hayfield. They nested there last year for the first time. For many years before nesting, the great blue herons frequented the pond. I even saw a green heron once.

Sparrows and purple finches

The Brimfield resident said he has not seen many migrants yet, but he had fox sparrows, which were around for a few days. He also saw his first of the year chipping sparrow and a bright male purple finch. An Oakham couple also have a purple finches coming to their feeders. I keep looking, but I have not seen any yet. I only put a small amount of seed out in the morning because of the many bears in my area.



Purple finch

Displaying Tom turkeys

On April Fools Day, three of my grandchildren and I saw a Tom turkey displaying in front of a hen turkey in a field in Barre. It was a quiet country road so we stopped and watched for awhile. My granddaughter, Lizzie, even took a photo, but it did not come out well as they were a distance away.

The Tom would display his tail feathers in a fan and strut about. Then he would lower them to the normal position and start the mating ritual all over again.

Loon mating behavior

The Loon Preservation Committee in Moultonborough, New Hampshire said in a newsletter, "Courtship is much more subtle in loons than it is



Loon

in some other bird species. Loons do not perform mating dance, if you see some flashy, splashy behavior going on between two loons, you are likely witnessing a territorial interaction between rivals rather than an interaction between pair members. Instead, loon courtship often looks like peaceful coexistence, they strengthen their bond by doing things together, from preening to foraging to patrolling their territory. You may also hear them hooting softly to one another."

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

HUNTINGTON

RESOLUTION

from page 1

Planning Commission and said further efforts will be through grant funding and at no cost to the town. Bash would do most of the required grant reporting. The first step in moving forward was to have the Select board approve a resolution that will then be submitted to American Association of Retired Persons. The Select board unanimously approved the resolution.

Data from the needs assessment might be used for future grant applications to fund services. Topics to be addressed can include housing, transportation, health, safety, and social opportunities. Work will be guided by a committee that includes COAs, older adults and related authorities. The group will oversee community engagement, listening sessions, the survey of needs and developing an action plan stemming from the data.

Online survey

A survey is already in place and any resident of Hampden or Hampshire county is encouraged to weigh in. Paper copies are available at the Huntington Town Hall. Online surveys are located at <https://tinyurl.com/AFPVSurvey>.

Hilltown Community Ambulance

John Garriepy, the town's liaison to the board of Hilltown Community Ambulance met with the Select board to explain the Nonpublic Ambulance Service Trust Fee. This was signed into law, but lacked input from smaller ambulance companies. HCA proposes sharing this fee as a flat rate across their member towns. The purpose of the fee is to get more money from Medicare; the government is supposed to return a match to the ambulance associations plus an additional 10%. The select board noted that the dates on the bill for the first two quarters of this fee were incorrect and need to be resubmitted. Town administrator Jennifer Peloquin asked Garriepy to remind HCA that they need to bill for the last two quarters of this fiscal year by July.

Garriepy also presented Huntington's share of the proposed FY24 budget for HCA, showing an increase of \$19,531, which does not include the trust fund fee. "They cannot do this. We're already into a contract with them. I'm not opposed to the new rate, but they can't force this on us. It has to be negotiated," said Renauld. "That's a \$20,000 increase a month before our annual town meeting."

Renauld retrieved the current contract, which states, "For each renewal term, HCAA shall notify the town at least 150 days before the end of the contract year."

Garriepy agreed, adding that he had contacted two area ambulance companies who had no interest in covering the hilltowns. "If we moved to a regional ambulance, you'd have to cover retirement and benefit costs, and one town would have to take them on for payroll and human resources," Garriepy pointed out.

HCA's member towns had balked at rising costs due to the ambulance company not fulfilling agreed upon terms, such as having a paramedic on a high percentage of calls. Garriepy noted they started to meet the goals for medics on call and then everybody upped and quit to take better jobs.

Garriepy will let HCA know that the town needs a corrected invoice for the service trust fee. The HCA board meets the following week, where the FY'24 budget will be taken up.

Planning Board issue

Huntington resident Shelley Wilton met with the select board asking for \$950 from the town to recover extra costs from her property survey, which she felt were made necessary by the town's Planning Board. Wilton felt her survey was done correctly the first time, but the board kept requiring resubmissions, which upped her bill to Heritage. Wilton had brought the final drawing to the meeting.

Planning Board Chair Linda Hamlin and two other members, were present to dispute the claim.

According to Hamlin, the town's own "Subdivision Rules & Regulations" led to the Planning Board asking for changes. "If the (original) plan had been approved as submitted and you went to sell your home in the future, there would have been a title search and it would have been a big problem." Hamlin said.

After discussion, select board members stated that they did not have enough information to proceed. They invited Wilton to come back with the first two drawings, so that they could see the differences.

ARPA

In other activities, the select board met with the water and sewer department to discuss American Rescue Plan Act funding requests. "We've already approved \$105,806, which is by far the largest appropriation of ARPA funding for any department in this town," responded Renauld, adding the select board wants to give a 7% increase to all town employees this year and just learned that there are more students applying for vocational schools than expected and that they may need ARPA funding to cover the raises. Renauld said, "Water and sewer has to be self-sustaining. We can't put it into the tax rate for everybody in town. It's against the law."

Kathy Engwar agreed, saying that the new commissioners had begun raising rates, but they'd previously stayed level for four or five years.

The town has about \$428,000 remaining in ARPA funds. At immediate issue for water and sewer is a need for \$38,200 for Tighe & Bond to complete a Nitrogen Removal Optimization Report and Copper Removal Evaluation Report required by Department of Environmental Protection. After discussion, the Board moved to provide the funding from ARPA, with Booth adding, "Get it done. I am recommending it, but I will not be giving you any more ARPA money. This has been going on since 2017." Renauld echoed, "If it has to get done, it has to get done.

Next year, when you look at rates, this money will be gone and you have to build up your own funding for these things."

Other business

In other business, Peloquin announced that B&D Variety wants to change from a malt license to a full alcohol license. This requires a new application and a public hearing, which will be scheduled for a regular select board meeting.


Peloquin also announced that the Recreation Committee wants Kayla Coivisto appointed to their committee, to complete an open term that expires June 30. This was approved unanimously.

The select board also chose a photo for the annual town report cover, reviewed maintenance needs at the Norwich Hill Cemetery and discussed the setting of new rates via the Franklin County Municipal Aggregation.

Annual Town Meeting

Annual Town Meeting warrant articles and steps needed to change the Town Clerk from an elected to appointed position were discussed. Regarding the FY24 Budget, Westfield Technical Academy's tuition went up substantially to \$20,613 and the number of Huntington students applying was higher than anticipated. Numbers on accepted students will be in on Monday, May 15, but as of now, the town is over the levy limit by \$197,843.

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As a free service for our readers we accept and will print when space allows community event photos and announcements. Just scan the QR code above and send us your photos and any information.

RUSSELL

CHILDREN ENJOY VISITING WITH EASTER BUNNY



Russell Recreation Committee held their annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 8 with a large turnout with over 50 children that attended. Shown are the raffle basket winners posing with the Easter Bunny. Submitted photo

PLAINFIELD

Plainfield Congregational Church hosts vocal recital

PLAINFIELD – There will be a free vocal recital on Sunday, May 21 at 2 p.m., at the Plainfield Congregational Church, 356 West Main St. (Route 116).

The recital is entitled “From Mozart to Verdi to West Side Story—Songs and Arias from Italian and French Opera and the American Musical Theater.”

Arabella Kramer, soprano; Fabio Aureli, tenor and Stephen Kramer, piano will perform art songs (Debussy, Cardillo), opera arias (Mozart, Verdi, Menotti, Massenet) and scenes from West Side Story. Based in Rome, Italy, Arabella and Fabio will be making their American debuts.

Admission is free and no tickets are required.

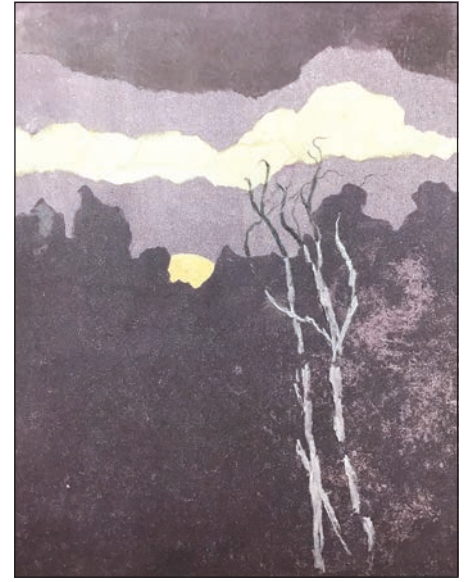
CUMMINGTON

Llewellyn to exhibit work at community house

CUMMINGTON – The Cummington Community House Gallery, 33 Main St., will host an exhibit of prints and collages by Wynne Llewellyn Monday, May 1 to Wednesday, May 31.

An opening reception will be held Saturday, May 6 from 6-8 p.m. at Cummington Community House.

She is known for her quirky, intriguing and evocative landscapes made from torn bits of paper. For more information, people may email Wynne at wynnellewellyn@gmail.com.



These prints and collages by Wynne Llewellyn will be on exhibit at Cummington Community House, 33 Main St., Cummington May 1 to 31. Courtesy of Wynne Llewellyn



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BLANDFORD

Town employees and citizens take CPR class

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – It all started when Pat Lombardo realized that people who are regularly at the town hall or in other public buildings should have Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation training.

He approached the Council on Aging, Board of Health and the Porter Memorial Library to see if there was enough interest in CPR certification.

The rest is history. There were town employees and well as interested citizens, who wanted to be qualified in CPR at the Saturday, April 15 training class.

After interest was determined, Lombardo contacted Mike Roberges of Roberges EMS Training Associates in Palmer. Roberges came to Blandford to instruct the 11 participants in the life-saving technique.

CPR certification is valid for two years.

According to Lombardo, there is a grant available for paid town employees.

“Basically, there will be no cost to



Viewing the training video from left are: Chris Cappa, Bret Hartley, Nathan Soares, Lloyd Martin, Mary Martin, Kim Chaffee, Judith MacKinnon, Heidi Taberman, Lucia Sulliva, Nicole Daviau and Ashley Nevu. The group includes Transfer Station attendants, library staff and Council on Aging drivers and educators.

Photos by Mary Kronholm

the participants for this American Heart Association program,” he said. Stop the Bleed and Choking are two additional classes Lombardo hopes to add to the training.

He is also concerned about the equipment available in case of an emergency. The Automated External Defibrillator located at the town hall is

waiting for a replacement battery and Lombardo said there should also be an AED at the Transfer Station.

He said also Blandford may be the first to have people in town departments certified in CPR who are not part of the first responder team with the Fire Department.

Town Administrator Christopher



EMS Training Associates instructor Mike Roberges has close attention of town personnel as he discusses heart episode symptoms.

Dunne said that the Wellness Grant from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association will cover the cost of the training for town employees.

Lombardo is the Fire Chief’s Assistant and an Emergency Medical Technician.

DIRT ROAD

from page 1

Preparedness grant program. The MVP program provides support for cities and towns to begin planning for climate change resiliency and implementing priority projects. The state awards communities with funding to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented resiliency plans.

Blandford, Chester and Middlefield have been awarded funding to review the three communities’ dirt roads and assess

culverts and prioritize repairs.

The second listening session will be Monday, April 24 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. Residents can bring photographs illustrating particular concerns. The second session will be accessible virtually on Zoom.

Written comments and pictures can be emailed to Town Administrator Christopher Dunne at administrator@townofblandford.com.

Blandford Fair seeks vendors

BLANDFORD – The Union Agricultural and Horticulture Society, better known as the Blandford Fair, is looking for vendors for the annual Summer Flea Market on Saturday, June 24 from 9 a.m. -2 p.m. at the Fair Grounds at 10 North St.

All vendor sites are \$25. Out door spaces are 12 feet by 20 feet while spaces inside the President’s Building are 10 feet by ten feet and electricity is available there.

All vendors must provide their own

tables and those outside must provide their own weather protection. Payment is due the day of the Flea Market and vendors must pre-register.

Set up is on Saturday morning from 7 a.m. -9 a.m.

Additional events that day will include a Touch a Truck.

For more information, people may email Greg Girard at ggirardsr@yahoo.com or call 860-559-1999 for a registration form. Forms are also available at the Blandford Country Store.

CHESTER

BOH announces two week Transfer Station closure

CHESTER – The Chester Transfer Station will be closed for two weeks because of human feces being dumped into the rubbish compactor again.

The Transfer Station will be closed Saturday, April 22; Wednesday, April 26. Saturday, April 29 and Wednesday, May 3. The Board of Health has discussed this with the DEP and they have advised this closure.

The contractor that hauls the rubbish compactor bin has notified the town and the DEP that they will not haul anymore if human feces is present in the trash, thus causing the transfer station to be permanently closed. Also, the facility that receives the final rubbish has also

sent notice that they will not accept any more loads with feces.

All entry to the Transfer Station will be verified by producing a permit. There is no hauling of anyone else’s trash, only the permit hauler may use the transfer station. All properties will be Title V verified as operational systems. All bag stickers will be logged and tracked. The transfer station is an integral part of our community, let’s all work together to keep it open.

If anyone has any information, they may call the Chester Board of Health in strict confidence at 413-354-7781, text 413-519-3396 or email boardofhealth@townofchester.net.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT FILLS POTHOLES WITH NEW EQUIPMENT



Chester Highway Department workers Chris Brown, from left, and Paul Hathaway (right) use the town’s new Asphalt Recycler and Hot Box Trailer to fill potholes with hot patch along Main Street in Chester Village.

Photo by Don Humason

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WORTHINGTON

Select Board candidates announce statements

WORTHINGTON – The only contest on the ballot is for one position for a three-year term to the Select Board. Candidates are Stephen Smith, candidate for re-election;

Ron Sampson and Edward (Ned) Ferguson. Two submitted candidate statements, but the third candidate, Edward Ferguson, could not be reached.

☆ CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT ☆

RON SAMPSON Select Board candidate

My name is Ron Sampson, and I am running for Worthington Selectboard. I am a life-long resident of Worthington, born and raised here. I attended the Russell H. Conwell School. My wife of 41 years, Robin and I bought my parent's home where we raised our two children, who both still live in town with their families.

I am a member of the Worthington Congregational Church. I also served in the Air National Guard. I have a small family-run logging business and farm.

I believe family is very important. Our two kids did attend and my seven grandchildren now attend the local Worthington school. I believe reading, writing, and arithmetic should be the main focus of our children's education.

I am a fiscal conservative, but understand it takes money to run the town effectively. I hope to help make the town a place where my grandchildren can afford to live. I am concerned about over regulation and over taxation and will bring those concerns with me into office.

I would appreciate your vote this May.

Ron Sampson

☆ CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT ☆

STEPHEN SMITH Select Board candidate for re-election



Stephen Smith

It has been a privilege to have served as a member of the Worthington Selectboard for the past six years. With your support, I would like the opportunity to serve for another term.

Working with my colleagues on the Selectboard and other town officials, I have strived to help identify and meet the needs and wishes of town residents. In doing this, I have been mindful throughout of the importance of the democratic process that our town meetings have epitomized. Perhaps the best example of this was presenting the voters with three options for establishing a town-wide broadband network. Comcast was not the first choice of many, including myself; however, it was the will of the majority and we now are able to enjoy the many benefits of town-wide, high-speed internet access.

During my current term, I have served as liaison to our Highway Department, as Selectboard representative, to the Senior Center Study Committee funded by a grant from the Hilltown CDC, and as project coordinator for the Conwell

School re-siding project that was undertaken last Summer. If re-elected, I intend to continue working on what will hopefully become new Senior and Community Center building project, largely funded by federal and state grants. Currently, over forty percent of our residents are over 60 and their needs need to be better addressed.

I am also concerned with how to assist our Health Center in their effort to address chronic staffing issues that were exacerbated by Covid. I further want to continue working with my colleagues to improve our public safety services: fire, ambulance, and police.

Finally, I am very aware of the need to strike a balance between public services and the cost to taxpayers. Both the selectboard and the finance committee have worked hard to maintain this balance. Ultimately, it is our job to recommend and for you to decide. So please take the time on Saturday, May 6 to attend Town Meeting and to vote in our election. I welcome the chance to further serve the town I moved to over thirty years ago, but that is your decision, not mine.

Stephen Smith

EMAIL: COUNTRYJOURNAL@TURLEY.COM

WESTFIELD

Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum holds book sale

WESTFIELD – The Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum book sale returns Thursday, May 4 through Saturday, May 6 at a new location, First United Methodist Church, 16 Court St.

Hours will be Thursday, May 4 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, May 5 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday, May 6

from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. On Thursday only, there is a \$5 discount coupon for educators with school ID and new Friends members joining at the door.

Donations of gently used adult and children's books, jigsaw puzzles, DVDs and CDs are needed prior to the sale. Donations will only be accepted by

curbside drop-off at the church during the weeks of April 17 and 24: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 4-7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m.-noon.

They will not accept musty or damaged books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, outdated manuals, textbooks or Reader's

Digest books. People may visit their website at <https://www.westath.org/friends-of-the-library/> for details.

The Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum is a 501(C)3 not-for-profit organization that supports the programs and services of the Westfield Athenaeum.

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 Monday at NOON, on holidays it is Friday at 2 p.m.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Bard College to host Mozart sonatas

GREAT BARRINGTON – The violin and piano team of Ronald Gorevic and Larry Wallach will offer the third installment of their traversal of the complete Mozart violin sonatas on Sunday, April 23 at 3 p.m. in Kellogg Music Center on the campus of Bard College at Simon's Rock, 84 Alford Road.

The public is invited, and admission is free. This is the third cycle of

sonatas the team has presented. Earlier ones surveyed the works of Brahms and Beethoven. This program will consist of four works dating from various points in the composer's career and exhibits the varieties of expressions, moods, and drama that Mozart was able to create within this form. A fourth and final installment is scheduled for September 2023 at Simon's Rock.

MassDOT installs warning system

GREAT BARRINGTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces it has installed a new Intersection Conflict Warning System at the intersection of Route 7 and Mountain Regional High School Drive in Great Barrington.

The new system, which is located at the driveway to the Mountain Regional High School, seeks to help improve intersection safety and reduce crashes at this heavily traveled location. This is the first of such devices to be installed on a state highway in Massachusetts.

"MassDOT is pleased to work with state and local officials and stakeholders to facilitate the installation of the Intersection Conflict Warning System, which is the first of such devices to be installed on a state highway in Massachusetts," said MassDOT Secretary and CEO Gina Fiandaca. "The new system will help improve safety at this busy intersection and provide stu-

dents attending high school in this area additional traffic guidance and support while driving to and from school."

The Intersection Conflict Warning System uses a radar sensor and two infrared sensors that trigger lights when traffic is approaching in this location. When those sensors detect traffic, they activate all of the flashing beacons on the mast arm and the LED arrays on the "T" intersection sign as well as the "STOP" and "YIELD" signs. After a brief hold period, all of the lights deactivate until another vehicle is sensed.

MassDOT worked with local officials from the town of Great Barrington, school officials from Mountain Regional High School, and other stakeholders to address concerns related to the school drive entrance and to propose and implement identified safety enhancements at this location. Installation operations, which were delayed due to supply chain issues, were conducted in March 2023.

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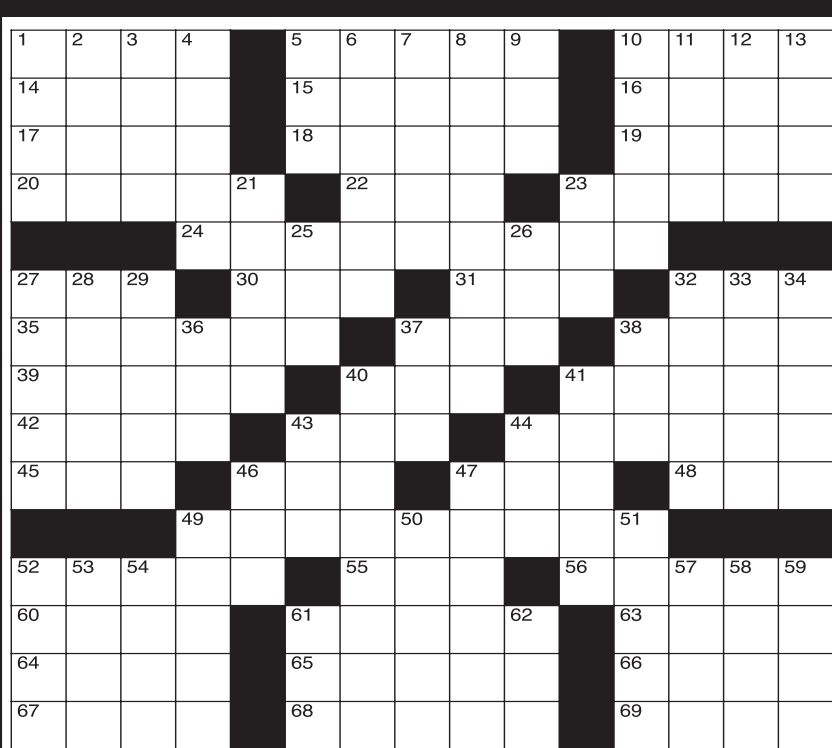
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Dylan and Marley are two
- 5. Makes healthy
- 10 The Who's "O'Riley"
- 14. Side sheltered from wind
- 15. Flat-bottomed sailboats
- 16. Egyptian supreme god
- 17. Advice
- 18. Mass of small, loose stones
- 19. Online learning services provider
- 20. "Lords" in Northwest Semitic languages
- 22. Of she
- 23. A place to relax
- 24. Critical and mocking
- 27. Consumed
- 30. You get one in summer
- 31. Bath
- 32. Luxury automaker
- 35. Spiders spin one

- 37. Guy (slang)
- 38. Greek personification of Earth
- 39. Large instruments
- 40. Domestic cattle
- 41. Appetizer
- 42. Oil group
- 43. Where to put groceries
- 44. Speak incessantly
- 45. Popular color
- 46. A place to sleep
- 47. Make fun of
- 48. Former CIA
- 49. Salts
- 52. Bleated
- 55. Never sleeps
- 56. Sword
- 60. Water (Spanish)
- 61. Cyprinids
- 63. "Dark Knight" actor
- 64. Fictional demon
- 65. Old World lizard
- 66. The content of cognition
- 67. Makes a mistake

- 68. A way to make wet
 - 69. Tide
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. One-liner
 - 2. Evergreen genus
 - 3. College in Rome
 - 4. Prevents from seeing
 - 5. Cycles/second
 - 6. Mischievous child
 - 7. Less common
 - 8. Honorably retired
 - 9. Midway between south and southeast
 - 10. A confusion of voices and other sounds
 - 11. Bony fish genus
 - 12. Type of pear
 - 13. Egyptian cross
 - 21. Satisfies
 - 23. Founder of Babism
 - 25. Bar bill
 - 26. Chicago ballplayer
 - 27. Performer
 - 28. Hairpiece
 - 29. Partner to flowed
 - 32. Aircraft formation

- 33. You have 3 per day
- 34. Goes into
- 36. College athletic organization
- 37. Wet, muddy ground
- 38. Talk
- 40. Witty conversation
- 41. Gurus
- 43. "French Price of ___ Air"
- 44. Sports equipment
- 46. Try to get
- 47. Flower cluster
- 49. Sea dwellers
- 50. Palmlike subtropical plant
- 51. Polio vaccine developer
- 52. Baseball's Ruth
- 53. Gelatinous substance
- 54. Hungarian violinist
- 57. Offered
- 58. Ancient Greek City
- 59. A way to derive
- 61. Touch lightly
- 62. Witnessed

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
 You don't want to have mundane tasks hanging over your head, Aries. Try to check as many of them off your to-do list this week as you can. This will free up a lot of free time.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22
 Cancer, the coming week will be a busy time for social opportunities. Other people will want to be around you as you can be the life of the party when you come out of your shell.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
 Take advantage of some free time to get things done around the house, Libra. Cleaning or other home improvements should be a priority.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
 Capricorn, you are surrounded by positive energy and eager to be out and about with friends this week. Start exploring all of the possibilities around you.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
 Taurus, you may be planning a much-needed vacation at the present time. Figure out a place you've never been and then fill your itinerary with plenty of fun things.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23
 Don't be surprised if your energy level is high. This leads to you feeling restless at home and even at work. This could be a fine time to take up a hobby.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
 There's a lot of activity expected close to home, Scorpio. A new business may open or there could be a movie star who is spotted in town. Maybe you'll get new neighbors.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
 This may be a good week to devote a large chunk of time to being alone. Some time with just your thoughts and a little silence could be everything you need.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
 You likely will have to devote a lot of attention to practical matters in the days to come, Gemini. This includes taking a hard look at your spending and making cuts.

VIRGO

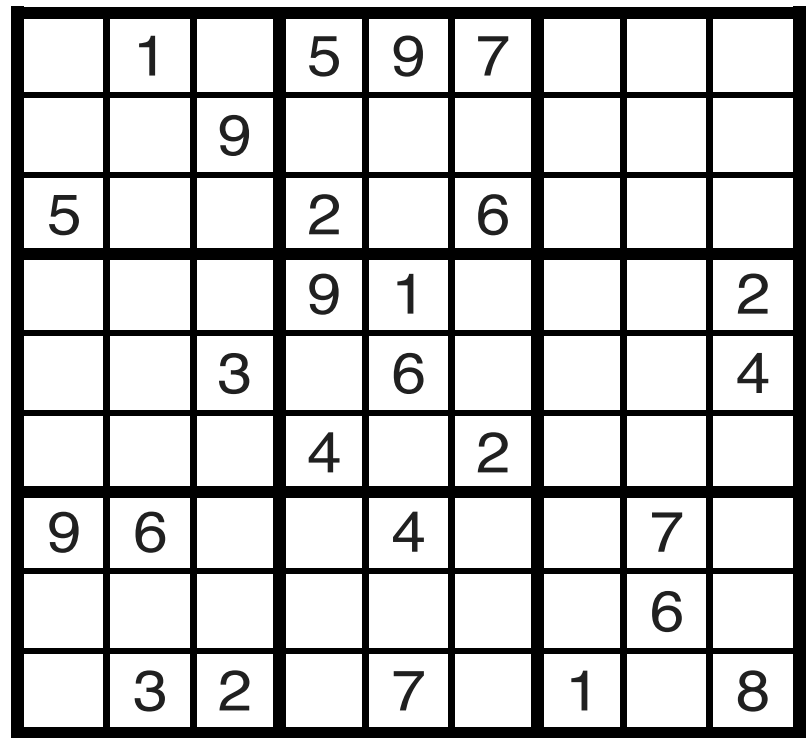
Aug 24/Sept 22
 Virgo, you may be looking forward to an evening out with a romantic partner or close friends. Try to narrow down a day this week or next. Have a few restaurants at the ready.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
 The thought of financial prosperity has you scouring the recruitment sites this week, Sagittarius. Speak to others about the pros and cons of leaving your current job.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
 Pisces, discussions at work could get a bit heated. It's best to distance yourself from these situations as best as you can.



SUDOKU

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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

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OBITUARY

James Michael Donovan, 83

RUSSELL – James Michael Donovan of Russell or “Mike” as many referred to him passed during a warm sunny morning on Tuesday, April 11 at the age of 83.

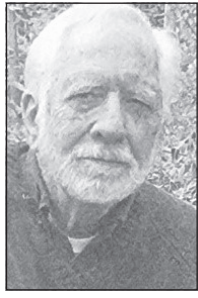
He was born March 9, 1940 in Westfield to the late Mary (Jackson) and Edward E Donovan Sr. of Woronoco.

From an early age, he discovered a passion for writing and exploring the local wilderness, particularly Mount Tekoa. He attended local schools and continued his education at the Andover Business School, as well as the Air National Guard where he began his photographic career.

He owned several photographic studios, worked as commercial photographer, free-lance writer among other careers until finding his niche.

As a lifelong Hilltown native, he served the community as a photographer and reporter with the Country Journal for 32 years, retiring in 2017.

His numerous writings included plays, poems, stories and was an active participant with the Miniature Theater in Chester. In 2004, he published his book, “A Place of Many Windings,” which centered on the history of Woronoco and how it intertwined with the rise and fall of the Strathmore Paper



Company. Despite struggling with the advancement of dementia, he continued to work on a book until his final weeks because “writers write.”

In 1965 he met the love of his life, Janet Eileen Smith of Belchertown, marrying a year later. They had a bond like no other and spent the next 34 years together facing life’s challenges while raising three children they cherished dearly.

He leaves his daughter, Jennifer Donovan and her partner Douglas Hocter of Lee, Sean Donovan of Westfield, Sarah Dean as well as two very special individuals, who were practically daughters to him, Mary-Ellen Donovan of Westfield and Meredith (Graham) Valencia of Cary North Carolina; six grandchildren, Shane and Connor Donovan, Michael Millar, and Douglas Jr., Cadence and Alex Hocter.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Janet; his son, Dylan Donovan; grandson, Jared Graham; his brothers Robert and Edward Donovan Jr. and sister-in-law, Jean (Hammond) Donovan.

A public service will be held Thursday, April 20 from 5-7 p.m. at Firtion Adams Funeral Home in Westfield.

DEATH NOTICE

DONOVAN, JAMES MICHAEL

Died April 11, 2023
Services April 20, 2023

Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

BECKET

Free workshop offers tips to prevent Medicare fraud

BECKET – Over \$60 billion tax dollars are lost to Medicare fraud each year.

Scott Simundza, a representative of the Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol Program will speak on Tuesday, May 9 at 9:30 a.m. at the Community Room (Council on Aging) inside the Becket Town Hall, 557 Main St. People will participate in a discussion on how to prevent, detect and report healthcare errors, fraud and abuse. All can have an active role in protecting Medicare for now and future generations.

This free information workshop will provide people with the tools to become a more informed and engaged health care consumer including the importance

of protecting their Medicare number.

Although new Medicare cards have random numbers and no longer Social Security numbers, people still need to be vigilant and protect themselves from becoming victim to deceptive marketing and medical identity theft.

For more information and to reserve a seat, people should call Paula Bergeron at the Becket Senior Center at 413-623-8934, extension 127 or email PBergerson09@yahoo.com.

The Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol Program is funded in part by grant number 90MPPG0051 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Community Living, Washington, DC.

OTIS

Town Clerk lists voter information

OTIS – Voter registration deadline is Saturday, May 6 for the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election

Voter registration on Saturday, May 6 will be from 9-11 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. in

the Otis Town Hall, 1 North Main Road. This is the last day to register for the Tuesday, May 16 Annual Town Meeting and the Tuesday, May 23 Annual Town Election.

Knox Trail group hike set for April 29

OTIS – The Knox Trail Otis Group will hold a hike narrated by Tom Ragusa on Saturday, April 29 from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

GPS 42.17402 -73.02689 hike start and park at the corner of Algeria and East Otis Road in Blandford on the town line, parking in the triangle. The hike begins at the town line of Blandford and Otis and follows the Knox Trail to Route 8 in Otis where people will carpool back to the starting point. Hike The rating is easy to moderate and is approximately 3.7 miles one way.

Tom Ragusa, local historian and retired from the Department of Conservation and Recreation will narrate. The hike follows “Ye Trodden Path,” the same route as the 1764 Survey where Colonel Henry Knox in the winter of 1775-1776 transported from Ticonderoga, New York to Cambridge, Massachusetts ordnance-59 cannons, for the use of Washington’s Army.

In 1758 this route was traveled by General Amherst, a time where Blandford was then Glasgow with 20

families, mostly Irish. The Hilltowns of Russell, Blandford, Otis, Sandisfield, Monterey were crossed by hearty men and oxen. We will start at the Black Oak Staddle at Station #1, past the 65 miles to Albany stone marker and visit all the waypoints along the way to Route 8 and the General Wadsworth Campsite. The Hilltown Hikers traveled this route and also through Sandisfield with Ragusa several times in order to document and waypoint the history in order to apply for its National Historic Designation.

People should register per car load on <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com> Hike is free and volunteer lead, suggested donation is \$5. Maps and bottled water provided. Hikers should be prepared for rocks, some road walking and deep woods. They will hike rain or shine. Friendly dogs are welcome. Suggestion donation is \$5, hike is volunteer lead. More details are available by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. People should email westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com or call/text 413-302-0312 with any questions.

STOCKBRIDGE

Congregational church to host Music on Main concert

STOCKBRIDGE – The Board of Music of the First Congregational Church, UCC, 4 Main St. announces the resumption of its Music on Main concert series with a chamber music concert on Saturday, May 7 at 3 p.m.

The concert features cellist Peter Seidenberg and pianist Hui Mei-Lin, performing music of Beethoven, Boulanger, Chopin and Britten. Peter Seidenberg made his solo debut with the Chicago Symphony, and has since appeared as soloist with many orchestras including Century Orchestra of Osaka, New American Chamber Orchestra, De Paul Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Soloists, and the

Eastman-Rochester Philharmonic. Hui-Mei Lin made her New York solo debut at the Weill Recital Hall at the Carnegie Hall as the winner of the Artists International Competition. Hui-Mei Lin and Peter Seidenberg have been musical partners for over 20 years and have toured throughout the U.S. and Taiwan.

The suggested donation is \$30 at the door. The concert will benefit the Musician’s Concert Fund at the church, which will subsidize and support future concerts in the Music on Main series and allow those future concerts to donate their proceeds to local charities. For further information, people may call the church office at 413-298-3137.

SOUTHAMPTON

Southampton receives Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Funding award

BOSTON –The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announce that eight schools and partner municipalities have been awarded \$13 million total in infrastructure funding awards through the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) 2022-2023 Infrastructure Program. The Program provides both design and construction services for projects between \$300,000 and \$2 million in areas immediately around public elementary, middle and high schools throughout the Commonwealth.

In Southampton sidewalks, crosswalks, a protected bicycle lane and other safety improvements along Pomeroy Meadow Road will be installed to increase safety for students and their families. The grant

was jointly submitted by the town of Southampton and the William E. Norris School.

Financial support for this program included \$15 million of Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds set aside for SRTS projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) within federal fiscal year 2027. The selected projects will soon begin the project initiation and design process before being scheduled for construction in the STIP.

The Massachusetts SRTS Program is a federally funded initiative of MassDOT. SRTS works with schools, communities, students, and families to increase active transportation among elementary, middle, and high school students in the Commonwealth.

NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue’s relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

For more information on news or community features for the *Country Journal*, please email countryjournal@turley.com.

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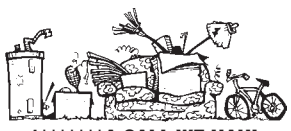
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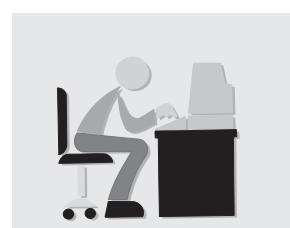
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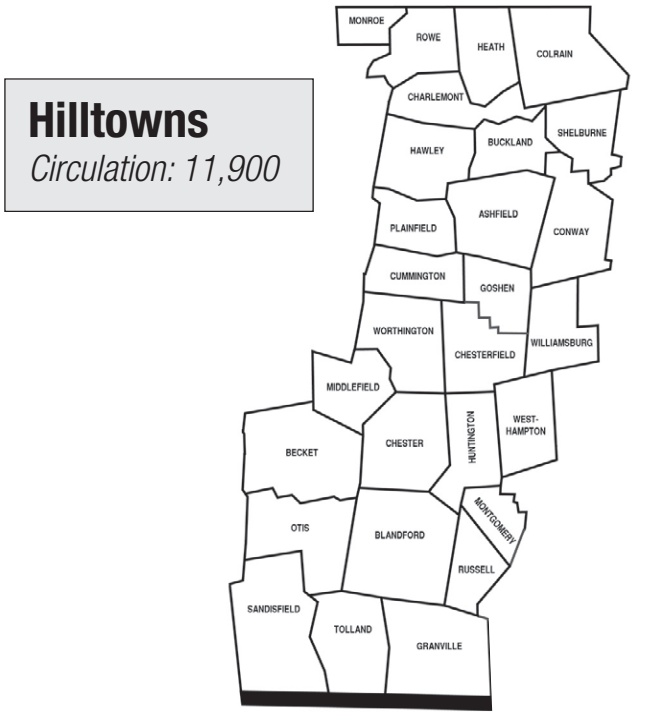
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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Hampshire Regional Middle School announces academic awards

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional Middle School announces students making quarter 3 academic excellence.

Grade 7 academic excellence

Students in grade 7 making academic excellence are: Cooper Alexander, Persephone Bennett, Mallory Christy, Isaac Clark, Amanda Clemeno, Ava Cleveland, Alana Hanke, Grant Jennings, Abigail Kaufmann, Logan LaPointe, Samantha Law, Charlotte Letendre, Moira Long, Micah Marino, Isabella Matthew, Olivia McAvoy, Eleanor Miller, Alexandria Montague, Alexis Morrey,

Charlotte Niswonger, Mason Normandin, Ezra Phillips, Luke Pickard, Caroline Puttick, Lukasz Robak, Torin Rowlett, Patrick Schmidt, Grace Scoble, Katherine Sturtevant, Trevor Wallace, Joseph Wright, Madelyn Zannotti and Honor Zigmand.

Grade 7 academic achievement

Students in grade 7 making academic achievement are: Kameron Andrades, Dexter Bonczek, Declan Butler, Colby Cabrini, Talia Craig, Weston Crawford, Griffin Darling, Ayden Dempsey, Madeline Desilets, Gabrielle Falkowski, Alexander Florek, Wyatt Hunter, Bedirhan Ibic, Elsa Kelly, Telyn Kelly,

Lilian Lumbrá, Samuel Mathews, Shawn McCarthy, Hobbes O'Sullivan, Abigail Pease, Elise Rida, Dominic Servaes, Lucy Skawski, Estella Steffenhagen and Malcolm Todd.

Grade 8 academic excellence

Students in grade 8 making academic excellence are: Kathleen Barry, Emmett Bastek, Elyse Campbell, Travis Carpenter, Emma Chateauf, Lily Connor, Alexa Cortis, Owen Cubi, RYanne Dubay, Natalie Dunlap, Nadia Easton, Eli Fern, Leo Florek, Amelia Gilman, Rachael Hickox, Astrid Jensen, Holly Kowalczyk, Katelyn Krause, Addison Miklasiewicz,

Shayne Moynahan, Hailey Paszko, Caroline Payson, Vanessa Reese, Nicholas Roy, Tobias Stearns, Eleri Tomsovic and Benjamin Zajac.

Grade 8 academic achievement

Students in grade 8 making academic achievement are: Jackson Bernier, Mya Blanchette, Sawyer Brodeur, Jack Cameron, Aidan Conklin, Isaiah Isa, Leo Ketcherside, Magdeline Lashway, Kyle LeBeau, Thomas Moore, William Nolen, Autumn O'Malley, Catalina Ocampo, William Schmidt, Brielle Stine, Isaac Stith, Chandler Woodward and Seamus Woofenden.

Downey inducted into history honor society

SCRANTON, PA – Clara Downey of Easthampton, a senior history major, was among the University of Scranton students inducted into Phi Alpha Theta, the international honor society in history.

For induction into the honor society,

students must have completed 12 credits in history, have a grade point average of 3.33 or higher in history and rank in the top 35% of their overall class. The University's chapter of the honor society was established in 1967.

MIDDLEFIELD

COA lists upcoming menu

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Council on Aging announces the meal for Wednesday, April 26 at the Middlefield Senior Center, 15820 Ridgewood Drive.

The meal is served at noon and people may dine in or pick up. The menu is lasagna rolls, shepherd's pie, spinach, dinner roll and applesauce. People

should reserve by calling 413-623-9990 and leave a message by the previous Monday.

The Consumer Protection Unit will be presenting an information session on phone and internet scams

On Wednesday, April 26 at 12:30 p.m. Voter registration will be held from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. as well on April 26.

Middlefield lists upcoming events

MIDDLEFIELD – The Third Friday evening activity on April 21 at 5:30 p.m. will be a crafting of a quick and easy project to keep or gift.

Supplies provided; donations welcome. Cat's monthly brunch will be on Saturday April 22 at 11:30 a.m. RSVP online: blossomcenterma.org/calendar/-cost \$5-up. Later, on Saturday April 22 at 12:30 p.m. an informal discussion and review of the May 6 Annual Town

Meeting articles by Adair. Located 16 Bell Road, red door at rear.

At Town Hall, 188 Skyline Trail, the Middlefield Fair will be serving breakfast for \$10, on Sunday, April 23 from 8-11 a.m. This Fair fundraiser has all you can eat blueberry or plain pancakes, plus bacon or sausage and beverages.

The Middlefield Town Election will be held Saturday, May 6.

Middlefield to hold in person early voting

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Selectboard voted on Wednesday, April 12 to opt into Early Voting

in person on the following dates: Monday, May 1 from 1-6 p.m. and Tuesday, May 2 from 1-4 p.m. at the Town Clerks office, for the Annual Town

Election of May 6.

Voting on that day is from 8 a.m. to noon. Deadline to register to vote for town election and town meeting is April 26, registration is being held

at the Senior Center from 9 to 11 a.m. and at town hall from 3-5 p.m.

Town of Middlefield Part-time Administrative Assistant Job Posting

The Town of Middlefield is seeking an organized individual with strong communication skills to serve as a part-time Administrative Assistant. The individual will provide administrative and special project support to the Town Administrator and Select Board. Work will include assisting the town Administrator and Select Board with planning, organizing, developing, coordinating, maintaining, and managing town operations and initiatives related to the Town's priorities and other duties as assigned. The Assistant will work approximately 18 hours per week with a somewhat flexible schedule. Hourly wage commensurate with experience and budget appropriation. A complete job description and required Town Employment Application can be found on the Town website: <https://middlefieldma.net>. Applicants will need to submit a cover letter, Town Employment Application, and a list of three references with contact information to the Select Board PO Box 238 Trail Middlefield, MA 01243. Applications and materials must be received no later than 2:00 PM on Thursday May 11, 2023. Middlefield is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Reyes scores for Lasell lacrosse

NEWTON – The Lasell University Lasers Men's Lacrosse team stayed hot, scoring a program record 28 goals in a 28-4 win over GNAC opponent Albertus Magnus.

The Lasers are now 7-5 on the season and 5-1 in conference play. Lasell opened the game up by scoring the first six goals, with Landon Reyes of Westfield one of them. Reyes also

scored with the first five minutes of the second period and in the final period.

The Lasers broke two team records in this game, most goals in a game (27), and most points in a game (45). Both records were previously set in 2011 and the new records are 28 and 48. The team's 66 shots rank third in program history.

Brenzel performs in WNEU spring musical

SPRINGFIELD – Rach Brenzel of Westfield performed in the spring musical "Little Shop of Horrors" at Western New England University on March 31 and April 1 and April 2.

Featuring catchy and memorable songs such as "Somewhere That's Green," "Feed Me," and "Suddenly,

Seymour," the musical is filled with clever and witty writing, offering audiences a one-of-a-kind experience filled with dark humor and unforgettable characters.

This is Rach Brenzel's second production with Stageless Players. Brenzel is working toward a Bachelor of Science in secondary education and math science.

WESTHAMPTON



STUDENTS PERFORM AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TALENT SHOW

Westhampton Elementary School had a talent show for fourth and sixth grade students. Two of the participants were Austin and Elliott Sojkowski, who demonstrated the art of Jiu jizu.

Photo by
Connie Dragon

Westhampton Public Library lists programs

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library lists upcoming programs.

The library is open Monday and Thursday from 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. It will be closed Monday, May 29 in observance of Memorial Day.

People may visit the town website or Facebook or Instagram at WesthamptonPublicLibrary for library updates. The library is open for in-person browsing and materials pickup as well as curbside pickup. To place a request for curbside pickup, patrons should email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386.

Ongoing programs include: Council on Aging computer classes with Bob

Miller the second and fourth Mondays at 10 a.m. (no class on May 29), a COA computer class with Peg Whalen on Wednesday, May 17 from 2:30-4:30 p.m., knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m., Scrabble group Tuesdays at 2 p.m. and walk-in wellness clinic with Westhampton's Public Health nurse the first and third Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m.

Ongoing programs for children and teens include: story time with Emily Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. and

after school program every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. (all children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult or sibling 12 years or older.

LEGO Club meets the first Thursday, May 4 at 3:30 p.m. and open crafting meets the second Thursday, May 11 at 3:30 p.m.