

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Ashfield, Becket, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Dalton, Easthampton, Florence, Goshen, Granville, Hawley, Haydenville, Hinsdale, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Peru, Plainfield, Russell, Southampton, Washington, Westfield, Westhampton, Windsor, Williamsburg, Worthington

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

April 30, 2026 | Vol. 48, No. 1 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

HUNTINGTON

Local history talk by John Garvey

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Local historian John Garvey will present a talk in the Huntington Public Library, 24 Russell Road, on Saturday, May 30 at 1 p.m.

Titled "Losing Murrayfield: The Border Changes That Made Huntington and Chester," the talk will be about the sometimes controversial border changes that created the towns of Chester and Norwich and then Huntington. Garvey said that the original town of Murrayfield encompassed all of what is today's Huntington and Chester, plus about a quarter of Middlefield and a sliver of Worthington.

The Book Club will meet to discuss April's read "The Blue Hour" by Paula Hawkins on

Thursday, May 7 at 4 p.m. Readers will revisit the isolated island of Eris off the coast of Scotland, which contains one home, one inhabitant and is only accessible every 12 hours at low tide in this suspenseful mystery.

The Book Club's read for the month of May is "Before the Coffee Gets Cold" by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. Visitors to a Tokyo cafe are able to travel back to a time in their life, but must follow three rules: they must sit in a specific, magical chair; they cannot change the present and they must return before their coffee gets cold.

Originally written for the stage, the book is the first in a series and has been adapted for the screen. The club will meet

GARVEY, page 2



John Garvey

BLANDFORD

Blandford remembers Fire Chief Thomas Ackley

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The town lost not only a slice of history, but a fire-fighting icon with the passing of Thomas Ackley last week.

He served the town and its people on the volunteer fire department for over six decades of his 84 years. He knew the community, its people, its places and what was necessary for the health, safety and welfare of the town. It was his family.

Ackley also served the town as a member of the Select Board, representative to the Hilltown Community Ambulance Association and both highway and water departments. He wore many hats throughout his lifetime, as a logger, sawyer, truck driver and owner and operator of Tom Ackley Tractor Service.

Tom joined the Blandford Volunteer Fire Department at the age of 15 and stayed with it throughout the ensuing years. The Fire Department's social media platform wrote, "His love and dedication to the town of Blandford will always be unmatched. His legacy will forever be etched in the his-

tory of the Hilltowns communities."

Saturday morning, the Fire Department escorted the hearse from the Firtion-Adams Funeral Home, where visiting hours were on Friday, to the White Church for the Celebration of his life. Pastor Howard Noe of Russell officiated for a very easy and respectful service.

Tom's youngest daughter, Melissa, spoke first and

CHIEF, page 7



Inset, Nancy Ackley pinned Chief Thomas Ackley with a 50 years of Fire Service pin February in 2011. Above right, Derek Daudelin, who is both Russell Fire Chief and Blandford Lieutenant, led the escort, carrying Ackley's Deputy Chief helmet.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm



MONTGOMERY

May Music in Montgomery performance calendar announced

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Music in Montgomery program announced performers for the month of May.

Co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and the Gray Catbird

Pottery Studio, Music in Montgomery takes place at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road every Thursday starting at 3 p.m. Performing this month will be Ed Bentley and Friends, Kara and Jerry Noble, Helen Arbour and Joe Nerney and Larry Southard.

Singer/guitarist Ed Bentley will open the month on Thursday, May 7, with some musical friends. Frequently seen performing with Jane Martin Pelletier and Ron Campagna, the trio are regular guests at the Daily Grind in Southwick and were also invited to perform at Ray Rays Cafe in Westfield on its closing night in January. People may stop in to hear a range of genres, including country, rock and folk music.

Husband and wife team Kara (bass) and Jerry Noble (piano) will perform on Thursday, May 14. They are well-known throughout the region from this music series and regular visits to Armbrook Village in Westfield. They also donated two performances last year for the Empty Bowls benefits for the Food Pantry at the Pioneer Valley Assembly of God Church in Huntington and closed the Sevenars Summer Music Festival in Worthington last year. Jerry was part of a trio that opened this year's Tuesday Morning Music Club at Trinity United Methodist Church in Springfield, which performed Mozart's "Kegelstaff Trio" and



Ed Bentley, seen here performing at Luthier's in Easthampton, is up first on Thursday, May 7 for Music in Montgomery.

Submitted photo

MUSIC, page 5

BLANDFORD

SB and FinCom hold joint meeting

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

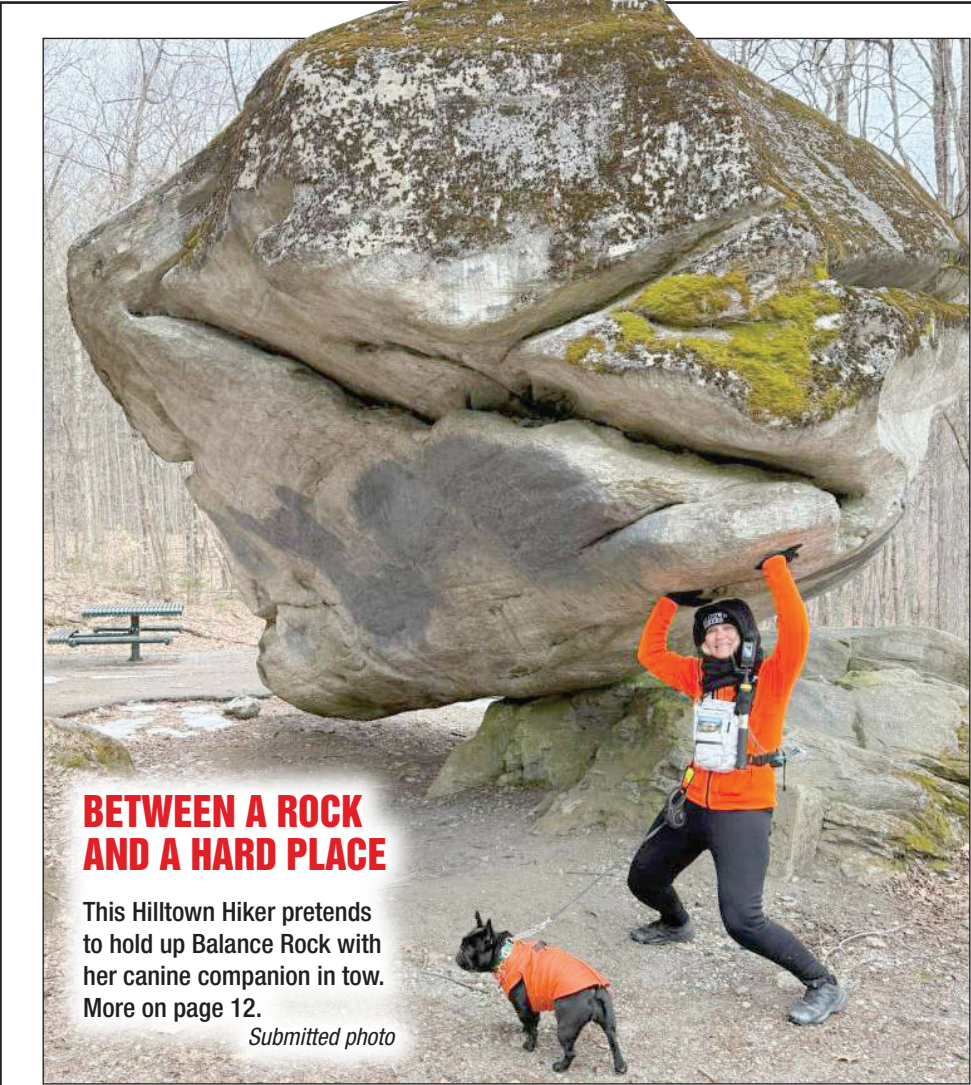
Select Board and Finance Committee members held a joint informa-

tional meeting Tuesday, April 21 to review the budget for the coming fiscal year.

The final result is a balanced budget and a project-

ed surplus of \$229,079.83. Expenditures total \$5,521,663 with anticipated revenue at \$5,925,742.83.

MEETING, page 7



BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

This Hilltown Hiker pretends to hold up Balance Rock with her canine companion in tow. More on page 12.

Submitted photo



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HILLTOWNS

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

SPRINGFIELD – The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission announces its most recent Direct Local Technical Assistance grant awards, allotting \$288,682 to support projects across Hampden and Hampshire counties.

Local towns receiving grants are: Blandford for “Permit Review Process Permitting Guide - Town of Blandford,” Solar/Battery Energy Storage System zoning bylaw and overlay work; Huntington for “Town of Huntington Master Plan,” updating permitting guidebook and Master Plan components; Plainfield for “Comprehensive Community Plan/Vision for Future,” putting together a comprehensive plan for public engagement; Russell for “General Bylaw and Zoning Bylaw Review and Update,” bylaws review and update and Southampton for “Southampton Zoning Bylaw

Review to Support Housing Production,” evaluating housing-related bylaws like inclusionary zoning and multifamily zoning.

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 updating 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 for the DLTA Program.

MassDOT lists 1-90 roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces daytime bridge repairs, bridge painting, and drainage and slope repairs on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of West Stockbridge, Lee, Blandford, Montgomery and Russell.

West Stockbridge to Blandford drainage and slope repairs will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 30.0 to mile marker 0, as mobile operations now through Friday, May 1 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 Thursday, April

30 from 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

In Blandford, bridge painting will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 26.2 from now through Friday, May 1 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

In Montgomery and Russell, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 36.0 now through Friday, May 1 from 6 a.m.-2 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.

HUNTINGTON

Spring paddle set for May 17

HUNTINGTON – The Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee and the Appalachian Mountain Club for a relaxed late-spring paddle on Littleville Lake on Sunday, May 17 from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

To register, people should visit the Littleville lake community paddle by visiting <https://activities.outdoors.org/s/oc-activity/a5UVX0000014EBt2AM/act00019890>. The group plans to put in near the Littleville Fairgrounds (upper access) and take out near the dam/primary Littleville Lake parking area. This requires a short car shuttle at the start; they’ll organize carpools and

keep it straightforward. (If conditions make the shuttle plan impractical, they may instead do a loop paddle starting and ending at the dam. Registered participants will get final logistics and directions.

Participants should be comfortable paddling in calm water and comfortable swimming in moving water/current, the upper section may have gentle flow)

Personal Flotation Device/life jacket required and must be worn while on the water. All participants will do a brief safety talk and sign a waiver at the trip start

They should dress for the water: layers appropri-

ate for spring temps, no cotton and no flip-flops. They should bring sun protection, bring water, lunch and snacks.

They should bring their own kayak or canoe if they have one. A limited number of boats and PFDs may be available to borrow. They should email the leaders in advance to confirm availability and reserve gear. If people are an experienced canoeist and willing to pair with a novice, let them know.

Organizers will cap the group at 15 participants and/or roughly 10–12 boats, depending on mix.

If people new to AMC paddling or this is their first time on Littleville, email trip leader at jason.w.costa@gmail.com ahead with any questions with their experience level and what equipment they’re bringing or borrowing.



GARVEY

from page 1

on Thursday, June 4 at 4 p.m. to discuss this book. Copies can be picked up at the library while available, ordered through interlibrary loan or borrowed through Libby.

The Book Swap Club will meet on Tuesday, May 12 at 4 p.m. This book club works a little differently. Instead of everyone reading the same book, participants bring a book that they’ve read and loved and swap that title with the rest of the group. The following month-after reading someone else’s favorite-return and talk about the books they read from these recommendations.

As always, monthly story hours for kids of all ages take place every Monday and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. Coworking

coffee hours continue on Wednesdays, May 13 and May 27 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. For those working from home or who have a college or free-lance assignment to finish, try working in a different setting and join others in the same boat for some camaraderie. The Keurig will be running to keep the motivation high.

Crafternoon is scheduled for Thursday, May 14 from 4-6 p.m. People may bring in their own project or try something new using the library’s supplies and materials. They may come with friends or meet new ones here.

On Friday, May 15 at 10 a.m. families of children age 5 and under are invited for a free, two-hour playgroup sponsored by

the Hilltown Community Health Center’s Family Center. Parents, guardians and caregivers should bring their child and experience a joy-filled morning of stories, activities and exploration.

People may stop in on the following Thursday, May 21 for the library’s monthly Game Night from 4-6 p.m. They may break away from the screens for some fun and friendly competition at the library; bring their own game in or use one of the library’s. Those who register in advance and take part will be treated to pizza and refreshments. They may sign up at the library, email librarydirector@huntingtonma.us, register by visiting the website at huntingtonpubliclibrary.org or call 413-667-3506.

RUSSELL

Russell Public Library announces events

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

The library will be closed in honor of Memorial Day Weekend May 23 through 25.

The Russell Public Library Trustees will meet Thursday, May 21 from 3:15-4:30 p.m. They ask parents, guardians, and students to take a short survey, to help them determine how they can provide better library services to patrons. The results of this survey will help us develop a Strategic Plan, which will not only help guide their forward progress for the next few years, but will also help then to qualify for grant funding

to help achieve those goals.

The library will have the Monthly Book Club on Tuesday, May 5 from 6-8 p.m. The book is “Show, Don’t Tell” by Curtis Sittenfeld. Books are available at the library. People may register by email rpdirector162@gmail.com, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Monday, May 4.

The June Monthly Book Club meets on Tuesday, June 2 from 6-8 p.m.. The book is “Where Did You Go Bernadette?” by Maria Semple. Books will be available by mid May.

Children may join Miss Dawne on Wednesday, May 13 from 5-6:30 p.m. for “Are You An Architect?” They will read “Robyn Boid, Architect” and build structures with a variety of materials.

There is no fee. They should register by email to rpdirector162@gmail.com, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Monday, May 11.

On Saturday, May 16:00-3:30 p.m. adults may create four beautiful, handmade greeting cards with Kim Bean. All materials will be provided. They should register by email to rpdirector162@gmail.com, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Tuesday, May 12. The program is limited to the first 15 registrants.

Adults may join Jade from the Hilltown Ambulance for a First Aid Class on Tuesday, May 26 at 6 p.m. They should register by email rpdirector162@gmail.com, call 413-862-

6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Friday, May 22.

Adults interested in exploring their family’s genealogy may join Hillary Schau, a professional genealogist, who will teach them how to start their own family research on Saturday, May 30 from 2-4 p.m. They may register by email rpdirector162@gmail.com or come in and sign up at the library by Wednesday, May 27.

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

The Russell Public Library’s “Library of Things” is now available for folks to borrow from. It has a variety of tools, appliances and leisure items available for check out.

BECKET

First Congregational to hold flower sale

BECKET – The annual Mother’s Day Flower Sale will be held on Saturday, May 9 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. or until sold out, at the First Congregational Church on YMCA Road.

There will be patio pots, hanging baskets and bedding plants. This sale

will benefit the Church’s Restoration Fund. There will also be a book and puzzle table to benefit the Becket Emergency Outreach Fund. Donations of loved puzzles and books for this sale are welcome. People may call 413-623-8300 with any questions.

WESTFIELD

St. Joseph’s National Catholic Church receives new pastor

WESTFIELD – With the passing of Senior Father Joseph Soltysiak in December of 2025, Bishop Paul Sobiechowski of the Eastern Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church announced that Reverend Pawel Lukaszewicz will now serve as full-time Pastor at St. Joseph’s National Catholic Church at 73 Main St.

St. Joseph’s Parish

Committee unanimously advocated to the Bishop to appoint the dynamic and devoted Father Lukaszewicz to the Westfield parish. He is married to his wife Monika, who is an educator and they have a daughter. Father Lukaszewicz also preaches at Holy Cross Church in Ware.

Father Lukaszewicz can be reached by calling 413-222-2851 or emailing pablo304304@gmail.com.

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CHESTER

Chester Hill Association holds roadside cleanup

By: John Nolet
Guest Columnist

CHESTER – The Chester Hill Association held its 36th Spring Roadside on Saturday April 18.

Some eighteen volunteers met Saturday morning at the First Congregational Church of Chester at 9 a.m. Trash bags were issued and road assignments were coordinated to get the best coverage of cleanup for the Chester Hill roadsides.

Over the next two hours volunteers walked their designated roadsides. They collected trash and discarded items found in the drainage ditches, edges of the woods, and open fields. Those items ranged from beer cans, beer bottles, nip bottles, tires and one semi-filled propane tank.

Some volunteers started roadside cleanup before Saturday due to other weekend commitments. Their many bags of trash were staged in the parking lot of the church for collection on Saturday.

In aggregate, the nip bottle count seemed to be the item most collected, second only by empty beer contain-

ers of various brands and time aging along the roadsides. Common trash such as plastic bottles, plastic cups and various paper trash filled the trash bags.

The primary roads involved in this yearly cleanup were Skyline Trail, East River Road and Bromley Road. Offshoot roads such as Abbot Hill Road, Crane Road, Higgins Road, Ingell Road, Old State Highway and Maynard Hill Road also were bussed by the cleanup volunteers.

It is estimated that a conservative weight of the trash collected was well over one thousand pounds across the ten roads patrolled by the volunteers. The Chester Transfer Station accepted the many bags of trash and bulk items at no cost adding the community spirit of this annual spring cleanup.

The late Newman Marsh of Ingell Road, and first president of the Chester Hill Association, started this roadside cleanup in 1990. Newman rallied his family members of all ages, and members of his Misty Mountain Farm family as the first volunteers in this effort.



The historic Center Schoolhouse is the landmark site of the Chester Hill Association.



The Chester Hill Association conducted its 36th Annual Roadside Cleanup over the weekend. This is one of the piles of roadside trash collected.

Lee Myers, current president of the Chester Hill Association, her husband Andy Myers CHA Director, organized this year's cleanup. Lee was one of the first of those participating in this now annual spring event.

The Chester Hill Association was established

in 1984. Its founding mission was to save the historic Chester Center Schoolhouse on Skyline Trail where it proudly remains today. Since that founding mission, the CHA has organized many festivals and community dinners as fund raisers. The proceeds of these fund-raising func-

tions are returned back to the Chester Hill community. One of those returns is by way of the annual \$1,000 scholarship award given to deserving area college students.

The CHA will be having its annual meeting is set for

June 14, at the Chester Hill Schoolhouse, stating at 2 p.m. There are openings for three Directors to be filled at this meeting. All are welcome to attend this meeting and participate in this legacy community association.

Hamilton Memorial Library announces upcoming news, events

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library, 15 Middlefield Road, Suit 7 will hold a Meet and Greet with Monster at a special story and fun time on Thursday April 30 at 11 a.m.

Children will get the chance to visit with Monster,

a Bright Spot Certified Therapy Dog and his handler, Cara Pease. Coming up in May, June, and July, the children will have the opportunity to sign-up for short individual time slots to read to this furry friend in a safe, non-judgmental

environment. Details are still being finalized. More information will follow. The Book Club meets Wednesday, May 20 at 4:30 p.m. They will be discussing "Time of the Child" by Niall Williams, a touching story taking place in 1960s

Ireland, about a doctor and his daughter whose lives are turned upside down when a baby is left on their doorstep as Christmas approaches. Extra copies are available. Bake, book and tag sale to support the library takes place on Saturday May

16 during Chester on Track. A free self-defense class will be taught by women for women ages 10 plus (under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult) on Saturday, May 30 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield

Road. No experience is necessary. Participants should wear comfortable clothes. They should RSVP to H.M.L. at 413-354-7808. This program is sponsored by the Chester Tae Kwon Do School and Hamilton Memorial Library.

WORTHINGTON

PTO to hold bake sale during meeting

WORTHINGTON – The R. H. Conwell Parent Teacher Organization will hold a bake sale and serve coffee during the town meeting Saturday, May 2 at 9:30 p.m. at R.H. Conwell Elementary School in the gym.

The PTO seeks donations of baked goods. All proceeds will go to funding nature classroom trip. Baby sitting will be provided by three Hampshire Regional High Schoolers during the town meeting.

Friends of SHAEC to hold plant sale May 16

CHESTER – The Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center will host their annual fundraising plant sale on Saturday, May 16 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in front of the SHAEC classroom at the Village Enterprise Center, 26 Main St.

The plant sale is con-

current with Chester on Track and the JLBA Hilltown Business expo, which will all happen in beautiful downtown Chester that day. The plant sale will offer annuals, perennials, bulbs, flowers, herbs and vegetables.

The Friends of SHAEC is a 501©3 nonprofit orga-

nization that supports the work done by the Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center, an off-campus UMass Adult Education program offering free GED prep and other classes supporting residents of the Western Mass Hilltowns of Chester, Huntington, Middlefield and Russell.

Friends of SHAEC sponsor classes and provides funding for supplemental classes, materials, and supplies for the Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center.

If people have plants to donate, they may email Southernhilltownsaec@gmail.com or call 413-345-1055.

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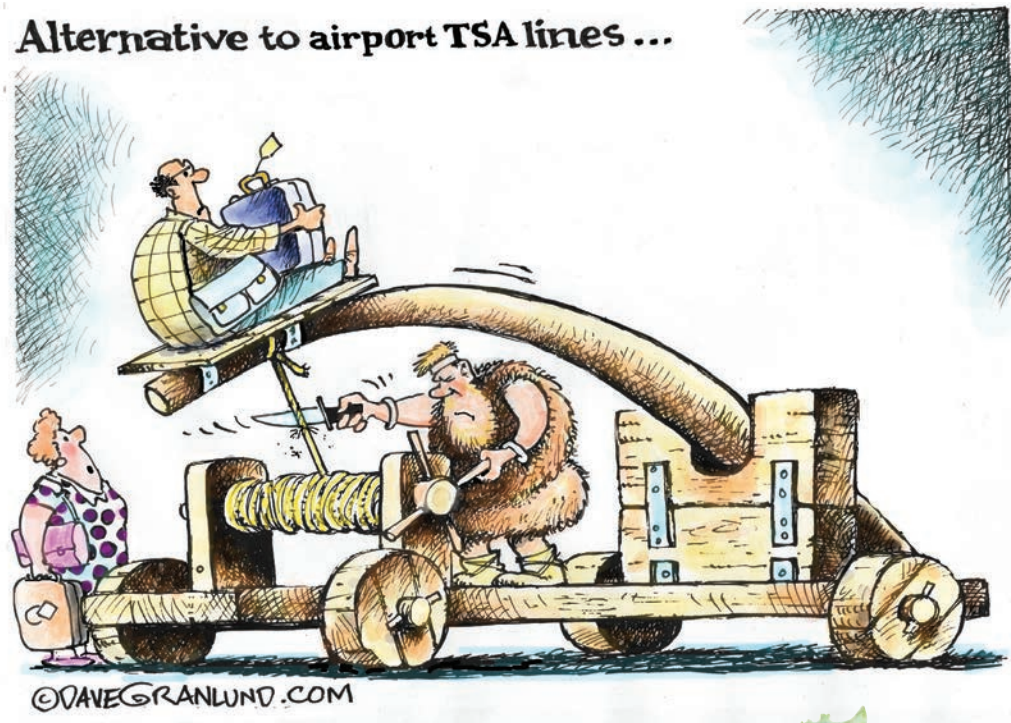
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OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

"Beets," me

I was so happy to finally get into the vegetable garden this past week. My peas seeds are sown! Yippee! Next on my list is beets. I have to admit that I am no beet aficionado. In fact, I began eating beets only a few years ago.

Who knows what turned me off in my younger years. Maybe it was the fact that I only knew beets by way of a can – we never grew them in our home garden. They honestly didn't look or taste all that yummy, especially to a kid who ate a total of two other vegetables; that is, of course, if corn counts.

Anyway, I think what finally convinced me to include beets in my garden was the fact that the plants are multipurpose (you can eat both the greens and the roots) and beets themselves are wonderful "keepers." Lately, there is a lot of talk about the benefits of eating them in relation to heart health.

Let me give you a brief run down on how to grow beets.

Beet seeds are unique in appearance. I can only describe them as multi-faceted "orbs."

The orb is a grouping of seeds. You can go through the trouble of trying to separate them by way of wax paper and a rolling pin, but most folks don't bother.

Because the orb is thick, however, and moisture must penetrate it in order for it to germinate, a good soaking is beneficial. Although you can try starting beets nearly as soon as the soil can be worked in spring, it is probably best to wait until two weeks before the last expected frost.

In our location that translates into the first or second week of May. This time-



In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



will give them the most desirable soil temperature (sixty degrees plus) for germination.

Be sure that you keep the seed bed moist until the seeds pop up, and continue to provide at least one inch of water throughout the growing season if Mother Nature does not. Steady moisture will keep your beets sweet and crack-free.

I should also mention that beets prefer a soil that is slightly alkaline, and well-drained but fertile. In other words, sprinkle some lime and work a couple inches of compost into the soil!

Beet seeds should be sown an inch or so apart- my theory is to sow once and sow heavy. Because multiple plants may come from one "orb" it is critical that you thin your plants: first to one and a half inch spacing and then, when beets are the size of a marble, to a final spacing of three inches apart.

Don't feel badly when you are thinning – you are honestly doing your plants a favor. Beets that are grown too close together will never develop to their full potential. Instead of letting the thinnings go to waste, make a salad and be grateful for some early season greens. Even when beets are at their final spacing I will rob the patch of some leaves every now and then for the very same reason. As long as I am prudent, no harm will be done to the developing roots.

Some beet varieties are grown especially for their greens. Try "Bull's Blood," an heirloom variety known

for its large and sweet reddish-purple leaves. "Early Wonder Tall Top" is another oldie – prized as much for its early beet greens as it for its beets.

Looking for less leaf and more beet? Try "Detroit Dark Red Short Top." Well over one hundred years old, this late variety is great for canning.

Beets also come in a wide array of colors. For a dependable and tasty yellow beet try "Touchtone Gold." Another interesting heirloom beet is "Chiogga" (aka "Bassano").

Cercospora Leaf Spot of Swiss Chard, Beets, and Spinach is a common fungus that appears as circular rings on the leaves, making them unsightly and barely edible.

There are a number of tactics that claim to help if this is a problem for you. Water at the base of the plant, and do it early in the day so it dries out by evening, especially in the summer months when humidity heightens the spread.

Likewise, if you make successive sowings, space them a distance apart from one another. There are organic and chemical means of control that are worth investigating.

If that's not for you, give growing these plants a break for two-three years and likely you'll be in the clear to attempt trying again. Some companies offer disease free seed, too.

It's worth looking into. 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.



Should I collect SS now or wait two years until age 70?

Dear Rusty:

I am 67 and 9 months old, collecting a modest SS survivor benefit with plans to collect my own much larger benefit at age 70.

I was confident this plan was a good one, but recent turbulent events make me nervous that cuts could come to Social Security at any time without warning. Would it be prudent to file for my own Social Security as soon as possible so that my benefit might be "grandfathered" in before any sudden and drastic cuts occur? I do not generally panic, but these are unprecedented times. I would be quite comfortable with the benefit listed on my 2024 statement for my current age; I was just hoping to maximize the benefit by waiting.

When I go to the Social Security website to view my 2025 annual statement to see the personalized monthly retirement benefit estimates for ages 68, 69 and 70 that section no longer shows. This omission makes me uncomfortable. Can I find out what my current benefit estimate would be for ages 68, 69 and 70? Or should I just rely on the 2024 statement?

Signed: Nervou in Portland

Dear Nervous:

Please do not be nervous that recent "turbulent events" pose a threat to your future Social Security benefits. Those events do not, in any way, jeopardize your future Social Security benefits, because Social Security is completely separate from all other federal political issues and finances. The primary problem with Social Security became an issue long before the current administration took office.

The Trustees of Social Security have been warning Congress for decades that Social Security's finances require Congressional attention. The fact is that Social Security revenue (as predicted decades ago) became insufficient to pay all benefit obligations in about 2021. Since that time, money from Social Security's reserved funds (Trust Funds) has been used to pay full benefits to all.

In 2020, there was nearly \$3 trillion in SS reserved funds, but that has now dwindled to about \$2.5 trillion as reserves are used to supplement SS payments. And that problem continues. The Trustees of SS now

predict that the reserves will be fully depleted in about 2032, at which time, lacking program reform by Congress, Social Security will be forced to pay out only what it receives in revenue. And that would mean an estimated cut of about 23% to everyone's monthly SS benefit. In the unlikely event that happens, wouldn't a 23% reduction to your larger age 70 benefit be better than a 23% cut to your lower age 68 benefit?

No one wants those cuts to happen least of all politicians because it would amount to political suicide (seniors are, after all, a very large voting bloc). Thus, we believe that Congress will act to reform Social Security to prevent any general benefit cuts from happening. It will, however, require Congressional bipartisanship because the reforms needed for Social Security are likely unsavory to some.

Those reforms may include SS tax increases and changes to the basic structure of the SS program to align it with today's demographic reality. The program needs reform, which Congress has, unfortunately, neglected to provide for many years.

And this neglect will likely also continue, at least through the forthcoming mid-term elections. It seems the nature of Congress is to wait until the last possible moment to offer corrective legislation.

Here's what to keep in mind: Congress already knows how to reform Social Security to avoid any future benefit cuts; they just lack the bipartisanship to accomplish that reform. For our part, the Association of Mature American Citizens has offered to Congress a commonsense reform plan via its "Social Security Guarantee." AMAC's proposal has received a positive reception in Congressional circles and we are optimistic that the proposal will provide financial stability to the program for generations. AMAC continues to advocate for SS reform in Washington, D.C. on a regular basis, even more intensely as the depletion of the SS Trust Funds grows closer.

We do not suggest changing your strategy for claiming Social Security benefits based upon fear the program will cut benefits. That's because it's unlikely

SECURITY, page 5



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN Guest Column

First it was low-calorie. Then it was fat-free. Then high fiber and low carb. Then gluten-free and zero sugar.

And now, it's protein.

Walk down the aisle of your favorite store and you'll see shelves packed with protein powders, shakes, chips, bars, coffee, cereal, even protein soft drinks, alcoholic

drinks and ice cream.

Food giants such as PepsiCo, Kellogg and Pop-Tarts maker Kellanova have rolled out protein-boosted versions of their products. Starbucks and Kroger are offering protein-fortified coffees and French toast sticks. The global market for protein-fortified foods is projected to hit \$100 billion by 2030,

Protein: The big food craze of 2026

according to Grand View Research.

What's going on? These companies hope to profit off a key concern of consumers: Getting more protein in their diets. According to a 2025 survey from the International Food Information Council, 70 percent of Americans said they're trying to eat more protein, up from 59% just three years ago.

We've always known that our bodies need protein to build and maintain lean muscle, hair, bones, connective tissues and general health. But what's driving the current fad, and how much protein do we need anyway?

The protein push seems to be partly the result of the boom in semaglutide (GLP-1) medications, such as Ozempic,

Wegovy, Mounjaro and the like. They are helping people lose weight and maintain it, but users are also losing muscle because "every pound is water, fat and muscle," registered dietitian Kim Shapira said in an interview.

"This has just boomed an entire industry of protein," she said.

The problem is that a good deal of these protein-packed foods may not be good for us. A 2024 survey by Spanish researchers, posted on the National Institutes of Health website, that found 91% of foods with "protein" marketing claims (PCs) were less healthy overall because they are ultraprocessed and often have added sugar, fat and sodium.

"The perception that

foods with PCs are healthy is incorrect, and consuming them may pose an additional health risk," the researchers wrote.

The protein we need everyday varies with age, weight, level of activity and other factors. To estimate your minimum recommended daily allowance (RDA), multiply your weight in pounds by 0.36 grams. For a 140-pound sedentary woman, that comes to about 50 grams a day.

Pregnant women and active adults benefit from more protein, but researchers really don't know how much is too much. (The USDA has a nutrition calculator on its website at myplate.gov.)

They do recommend spacing out protein consumption

HEALTH, page 5

Country Journal

We Want to Hear From You

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The Country Journal (USPS 483-550) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069.



WEB countryjournal.turley.com



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Turley Publications, Inc. www.turley.com

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ISSN NO. 0747-2471

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 500 words or less in length. We require letter writers to include his or her name, town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

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.

MONTGOMERY

MUSIC

Bartok’s “Contrasts. Their performances are dubbed, “We are the people our parents warned us about.”

The following week, singer/songwriter/guitarist Helen Arbour and saxophonist Joe Nerney will perform on Thursday, May 21. Arbour is known for the bands Skyline, Sure Shot and Liquid Floyd. Nerney has been seen performing with Seth

Glier and as part of the West Hill Two duo and his larger ensemble, West Hill Groove. Together, they’ve been performing at Incandescent Brewery, Hitchcock Brewery, Skyline Brewery (we’re sensing a theme here!) and the Whiskey Barrel in South Hadley.

Closing the month will be Larry Southard on Thursday, May 28. The

guitarist with the deep, rich vocals performed recently at the Route 8 Pub with Lesley Friedman Rosenthal and at the Knox Trail Inn on Valentine’s Day with a whole bunch of folks! Southard’s repertoire is extensive so don’t be afraid to ask for requests.

Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are

accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen’s Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians, who perform each week.

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

from page 1

CHESTERFIELD

Congregational church to host Mother’s Day breakfast

CHESTERFIELD – People are invited to celebrate Mother’s Day at the best breakfast in the Hilltowns on Sunday, May 10 from 8-10 a.m. in the Chesterfield Congregational Church, 404 Main St.

The cost is a voluntary donation. The menu features pancakes with or without blueberries, French toast with pure Chesterfield maple syrup, free

range, organic, farm-fresh eggs any style including eggs Benedict, breakfast sandwiches, sausage, home fries, excellent homemade corned beef hash and homemade biscuits and sausage gravy. Juice, tea, cocoa and coffee will also be available.

In addition, the special item for this month’s breakfast will feature a fresh fruit salad with raspberry sauce.

EASTHAMPTON

bankESB appoints Jeffry Pierce as senior vice president

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB announces the appointment of Jeffry Pierce as senior vice president of SBA Lending.

In this role, Pierce will be based out of the bank’s Elm Street, Millbury office and will lead efforts to expand and enhance the bank’s Small Business Administration lending programs.

Pierce has more than 40 years of banking experience, with deep expertise in SBA and commercial lending. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a strong ability to build high-performing teams and deliver tailored financing solutions that support small business growth.

Prior to joining bankESB, Pierce served as

regional vice president and SBA commercial market leader at HarborOne Bank. He also held the position of senior vice president, regional sales manager for SBA lending at TD Bank, where he was instrumental



Jeffry Pierce

in driving regional lending strategies and business development initiatives.

“Jeffry’s extensive experience and proven leadership in SBA lending make him an outstanding addition to our team,” said

Scott Sanborn, executive vice president and commercial banking officer at bankESB. “His deep understanding of the small business landscape and commitment to building strong customer relationships align perfectly with our mission to support the communities we serve. We are excited to have him on board and look forward to the impact he will make.”

Pierce has also been actively involved in community service, including serving on the board of the Middlesex United Way. He holds a bachelor’s degree in finance from Central Connecticut State University.

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton.

OPINION

SECURITY

from page 4

that all benefits will be cut because we believe Congress will eventually enact reform. And even in the unlikely event that Congress neglects to reform the program by 2032, the percentage of reduction to a higher monthly SS benefit amount would be better than a similar reduction to a lower benefit amount. In other words, your original plan is still a prudent one.

Regarding your question about your estimated benefits, I expect your most recent SS statement didn’t include future benefits because you are already collecting SS survivor benefits. You can contact SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to obtain the future SS retirement estimates you seek.

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.

HEALTH

from page 4

tion throughout the day rather than consuming most of it at dinner, as most Americans do.

Jumping on the protein bandwagon takes careful consideration. It’s not just a question of jacking up protein consumption, but doing it in the context of healthy eating. In other words, eating six protein bars a day is not likely to help your overall health.

If you’re ready to boost your protein intake, here are some tips:

Turn to protein-rich unprocessed or lightly processed foods, which you may have in your pantry and fridge. According to the USDA, some of the best are:

- Tuna: 21 grams of protein in 3 ounces

- Cooked chicken or turkey: 19 grams in 3 ounces
- Plain Greek yogurt: 17 grams in 3 ounces
- Cottage cheese: 14 grams in ¼ cup

Other good sources are beans, nuts, low-fat dairy and eggs.

Don’t translate “eat more protein” as “eat more beef and cheese.” The saturated fats in these foods are not good for cardiovascular health.

To avoid weight gain, cut back on other foods. If you’re consuming more calories as protein, reduce the calories you get from breads, sweets and alcohol. Rather, up your intake of fruits, veggies and legumes.

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

Holy Family Parish

Rev. Ronald F. Sadlowski, known as Fr. Ron
5 Main St., Russell, MA 01071
413-862-4418
Office Hours: No set times.
Please call, leave a voice message or email: holyfamilyrussell.org
parish@holyfamilyrussell.org
Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m.
Sunday Masses: 8:15 a.m. & 11 a.m.

New Boston Congregational Church

Pastor Eric Kriebel
4 Sandisfield Rd., PO Box 81
Sandisfield, MA 01255
Services held twice monthly, check website: www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050
413-667-3196
pvaglife@gmail.com
www.pioneervalleyag.org
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

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

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.

GOSHEN

Town Clerk lists election and town meeting information

GOSHEN – The Annual Town Election will be held on Saturday, June 6 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in the John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St.

A sample ballot can be found on the town website by visiting www.goshen-ma.us. In addition to voting in person on election day, Vote by Mail is a permanent option for all Massachusetts voters. People may register to do so in the following ways: Submit a signed application via email, mail or fax to the town clerk's office. Applications can be found on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's election webpage. The application must include a signature that can be compared to a handwritten signature. Electronic signatures, scanned applications and photos of applications are acceptable. People may use the State's Mail-in Ballot Application System, also at the Secretary of the Commonwealth's election webpage.

To participate in the upcoming Annual Town Election, there are a few important deadlines to keep in mind. If people wish to vote by mail, their application must be submitted in writing and received by the town clerk's office on Monday, June 1 no later than 5 p.m. It's important to apply as early as possible, particularly if their ballot will be mailed out of town. The U.S. Postal Service recommends allowing up to seven days for mail delivery, so to ensure they receive their ballot in time to return it, it's best to apply two to three weeks before Election Day.

The last day to register to vote in order to participate in the election is Wednesday, May 27. Registration will be available in the town clerk's office from 9-11 a.m. and again from 3-5 p.m. on that day.

A moderated pre-Annual Town Meeting Voter Information Session will be held on Wednesday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the John James Memorial Hall. The Annual Town Meeting will take place on Saturday, May 16 at 9:30 a.m., also at the John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St.. To participate in the meeting, residents must be registered to vote by Wednesday, May 6. Voter registration will be available that day at the town clerk's office from 9 -11 a.m. and again from 3-5 p.m. on that day.

People may email Town Clerk Kristen Estelle with any questions or concerns at clerk@goshen-ma.us or call 413-268-8236, extension 107.

COA announces upcoming events

GOSHEN – May luncheon is on Tuesday, May 12 at noon in John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St.

It will be a buffet of Chinese food from Panda Garden in Williamsburg.. There will be egg rolls, pork lo mien, vegetable lo mien, house fried rice, vegetable fried rice, chicken and broccoli. The Hilltown CDC Housing Rehab Program is bringing dessert. Representatives from this program will be there during lunch to talk about this program that aids homeowners with repairs. Seniors are encouraged to ask questions. They should email Kerry at coa@goshen-ma.us or call 413-268-9354 by Tuesday, May 5 to let her know if they will attend the lunch. Suggested \$5 donation to the COA is greatly appreciated.

On Friday, May 1 Community Connections meets from 10-11a.m.in the upstairs dining room of the Goshen Town Hall. This month they welcome Hannah Morano of Sweet Birch Herbs in Ashfield. She is a holistic health coach and clinical herbalist. She will teach about gentle herbal support for sleep challenges, joint stiffness and inflammation, digestion, circulation and heart health and memory and mood. People should sign up with Kerry at coa@goshen-ma.us.

Strength in Numbers a six week program starting on Monday, May 4 Goshen Town Hall from 1:30-2:30 p.m. A fall prevention program will be at the Goshen Town Hall from 1:30-2:30 p.m. for six weeks starting on May 4. Taught by physical and occupational therapists from the Cooley Dickinson Visiting Nurse Association, this free program covers topics including determining their risk of falling, strength and balance activities, managing medications, visual concerns and age related changes and home safety recommendations. Practical and useful items will be distributed free of charge to participants. To reap the full benefits of the program, participants are asked to commit to all six sessions if possible. They will meet on six consecutive Mondays with the exception of Memorial Day on May 25. This program is free thanks to grants from the Eversource Energy Foundation and the Roy Foundation. People may email Kerry Normandin at coa@goshen-ma.us or call 268-8236, extension 118; sign up was by Wednesday, April 29. They welcome all older adults.

On Wednesday, May 6 games group will meet in the library from 2-4 p.m. They have a variety of games. Playing games is good for everyone; having minds engaged while having fun is a win-win. All are welcome to attend.

On Tuesday, May 19 there will be a trip to the Norman Rockwell Museum Trip. The COA hopes to fill the 50 passenger bus. They will leave the Goshen Town parking lot at 9:20 a.m. and return at 3:45 p.m. They have a luxury bus reserved that has seating availability for two wheelchairs. The plan is to spend a few

hours viewing “the best of American Illustration art that tells the stories of our lives, explores historical perspectives, and provides a delightful escape from the every day.” The group will have a guided tour and then time to wander through 10 galleries and 36 acres of scenic views and have a pre-ordered boxed lunch on the beautiful museum grounds. This trip will be paid for by the Goshen COA, however donations are gratefully accepted. People should email Kerry at coa@goshen-ma.us or call 413-268-9354 by Tuesday, May 5 to reserve a spot.

On Wednesday, May 20 crafts group meets in the library from 2-4 p.m. People may bring their craft project they have been working on at home and come work together. Some knit, some sew, some crochet, some color- just bring it along. The COA encourages group and it is always fun to chat and have a few laughs while creating.

Local seniors are welcome to learn from Hilltowns Elder Law Education Program on Thursday, May 21 at 2 p.m. in John James Memorial Hall. The Goshen and Cummington Council on Agings host this free event on Thursday, May 21 at 2 p.m. at the Goshen Town Hall. Atty. James Loughman from Donovan O'Connor & Dodgig, LLP will be the volunteer speaker. The event is part of the statewide Elder Law Education Program presented by the Massachusetts Bar Association. It corresponds with the publication of the revised and expanded “2026 Elder Law Education Guide,” the 17th edition of the resource guide, which will be available at the event and online at the MBA's companion website at www.massbar.org/elderlaw. The topics to be discussed this year include Veteran Affairs Financial Benefits, how to protect home and assets, power of attorney and health care proxies, reverse mortgages, Homestead and Life Estates and Medicare/Medicaid changes. For more information about the presentation, people may email Kerry at coa@goshen-ma.us or croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

On Thursday, May 21 technology help in the library will be available from noon-2 p.m. People can ask questions regarding their computer, phone, tablet or any other technology related question and they will do their best to help.

Highland Valley Elder Service grab and go lunches (only this month due to a museum trip on May 19) will be held on Tuesday, May 26. HVES delivers meals to Goshen COA. Participants pick up their hot lunch at the Goshen Town Hall from 12:30-1 p.m. The lunch for May 26 is a choice of a hot dog or broccoli and cheese quiche. The meals also include milk, vegetables and dessert. There is a suggested \$4 donation given to Highland ValleyElder Services to offset the cost of the meal. People should call Kerry at 413-268-9354 if they would like to sign up to get these nutritious and delicious meals.

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 \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) 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.

Country Journal
Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to countryjournal@turley.com, or call us at 413-283-8393. Corrections will be printed on page 4 or 5.

FLORENCE

Florence Bank ranked top SBA lender

FLORENCE – Florence Bank has been named the top SBA lender in Western Massachusetts for the first and second quarter of the SBA's fiscal year, which runs from Oct. 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026.

Out of the 55 SBA loans that were approved in the Western Massachusetts region, Florence Bank facilitated 11 of them, with originations totaling over \$2.8 million. The SBA helps small business owners and entrepreneurs by providing them with counseling, cap-

ital, and contracting expertise. Programs such as the SBA 7(a) Guaranty and 504 Loan programs provide credit enhancements and loan guarantees, which helps businesses who may not meet conventional underwriting standards obtain credit.

Vice President and Small Business Lender Callie Flanagan has over 20 years of experience in the financial services industry and has spent the last 14 working with the SBA to help small businesses launch and grow in Western Massachusetts. “We are lucky to live in an area that is robust with small, local-

ly owned businesses. They make our communities more vibrant, provide employment, and keep money circulating locally,” said Flanagan. “We are happy to help these businesses grow and expand and are thankful to have access to the SBA programs to help do this.”

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley these businesses grow and expand and are thankful to have access to the SBA programs to help do this.”

HELP WANTED

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gscibelli@turley.com



WESTHAMPTON

Congregational church holds gathering for peace

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Congregational Church, 1 Tob Road, will hold a Community Gathering for Peace on Sunday, May

17 at 6:30 p.m. on the Westhampton Common. All are welcome. This is organized by the WOW Committee of the Westhampton Church.

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BLANDFORD

Tree give away observes Arbor Day/Earth Day



Select Board Chair Jackie Coury picks out an American Plum tree from Tree Warden Mark Boomsma Arbor Day collection.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

BLANDFORD – Tree Warden Mark Boomsma assisted by his family, was on hand at the Town Hall parking lot on Tuesday, April 21 with a supply of trees.

The trees were available for the asking in commemoration of Arbor Day and Earth Day courtesy of the Boomsma family’s annual tradition. This year’s offerings included White Dogwood, River Birch, American Plum and Douglas Fir. All were bare-root stock.

The White Dogwood is a flowering tree which can grow to 25 feet and blooms in the early spring. It has attractive features year-round; green leaves turn red in the fall, along with red berries and of course, the white blossoms. River Birch are popular as landscaping trees and can grow in clumps or singly and are fast growing, once established, almost three feet a year.

The American plum is native to North America. It originally grew over much of the Northeastern and Southeastern United States. The fruit is prized for jams and jellies, but also good fresh fruit.

And the Douglas Fir is well known as a Christmas Tree.

Boomsma will have the remaining trees available at the Town Hall on Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m.-noon.

Artists exhibit their work

SOUTHWICK – Two Blandford artists had their work selected for the Southwick Cultural Council’s 25th Annual juried art show.

The show was for the weekend only at the Southwick Town Hall Senior Center. Jeri Hamel and Susan Racine, both from Blandford, exhibited

their paintings. The exhibit included fine arts, fine art crafts and photography in any media. There were felted sculptures, oils, water colors, and



Blandford artist Susan Racine stands with her selected works at the Southwick Senior Center.



Blandford artist Jeri Hamel is shown with her selected works at the Southwick Senior Center Saturday, April 24.

Courtesy photos by Richard Hamel

Board approves solar by law changes

BLANDFORD – The Planning Board held a public hearing at the Town Hall on Friday, April 24 at 6 p.m. to present and discuss the new Zoning Bylaws for ground mounted solar arrays and Battery Energy Storage Systems.

According to Planning Board Chairman Greg Garfield, “There were no major changes.” Both the solar installation and

Battery Energy Storage System bylaws were updated and made stronger. There were no changes for the small, residential solar installations.

“What we’re looking for,” said Garfield, “is for protection against the large commercial solar installations and looking out for our residents.” The Planning Board’s vote to approve the bylaws was unanimous and

they presented their actions to the Select Board on Monday, April 27.

As it stands right now, the newly revised bylaws will be on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on Monday, June 1.

Planning Board Chairman Garfield said about 20 people attended the hearing and included visitors from Becket and Southwick.

CHIEF

said she wanted to capture the essence of her father. Married for 66 years to Nancy, the couple moved to Blandford for the last 54 years to a home he built. She said, “He worked hard,” and that it only took one “look” of disapproval or one word, “Hey” to correct behavior. And when he was happy, it showed with “a big grin.”

She relayed an incident in her career with the Environmental Police that did not produce the desired results. She spoke with her father about it and he told her words that she has carried ever since, “You did all you could do.”

Fire Chief Adam Dolby addressed the gathering next. Chief Dolby began his remarks telling about his first medical call as a member of the department. “When I ran my first call on the Blandford Fire Department, the first thing the patient said to me was “where’s Tommy?”

I’m not sure what that says about my patient care skills that someone called 911 and asked for someone better when I got there, but you could see people relax when Chief walked in. They expected him to be there when they called for help.

He was a constant. In fact, for perspective, the last time the Blandford Fire Department was without Tom Ackley, we didn’t respond to a single call on the Mass Pike because it didn’t exist. Nearly 70 years of showing up, over and over again.”

He continued citing Tom’s reliability. “Simple.

Reliable. No drama. When something needs to be done, do it. And that never changed. Even recently, he told me he was going to sit out the 2 a.m. calls and ‘let us young kids handle’ mind you, I was 50 at the time. Yet Tom would still check in.”

Dolby added, “That was Tom. He never showed up for credit. He showed up because people needed him.” He closed his remarks by thanking Tom’s family for sharing him for all the years, for the missed dinners, sleepless nights, and the weight of calls “you don’t talk about.”

“You don’t do this for that long without a lot of support behind you. To Nancy and the kids, on behalf of the department and the town, thank you for everything you did to make that possible,” he said.

Pastor Noe closed saying that Tom was a “giver” not to please others, but because he “wanted to serve. a rare quality.”

The interment was across the street from the White Church in Hill Cemetery. After the Lord’s Prayer, there was a clanging of a fire bell, signaling the last alarm and a return to quarters. Deputy Chief Tom Ackley was relieved of duty. All 14 members of the Blandford Volunteer Fire Department participated as well as representatives from other town’s departments and previous Blandford Fire Chiefs.

There was a luncheon at the Town Hall for everyone.

Select Board member Ted Cousineau spoke about the job the volunteer firefighters do. “They put themselves in harms



Fire Chief Adam Dolby addressed the gathering.

way,” he said, without knowing what’s out there. He presented an official Proclamation to Nancy Ackley citing Tom’s dedication to the town.



Blandford Fire trucks escorted the hearse from the Firtion-Adams Funeral home in Westfield.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

from page 1

Residents to bid farewell to Pastor Droma, family

BLANDFORD – Deacon Stephen Hart invites residents to stop at the parsonage next to the Blandford Congregational Church chapel on Main Street on Sunday, May 3 from 4-5:30 p.m. for a last goodbye to Pastor Ciprian

Droma and his family.

Pastor Ciprian served as interim pastor for the past three years.

They are returning to the middle east Romania until it is safe for them to return to northern Iraq.

MEETING

from page 1

They also reviewed a draft of the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. The board decided to funnel some funds set aside for Veterans for the 250th celebrations planned for the weekend before July 4, in as much as it is a memorial event. This will leave Recreation and Memorial Day funds intact.

The board approved establishing a revolving fund for donations for the 250th celebration and for Bicentennial Park to be labeled Special Events. Any funds donated will have to be spent within a year-and-a-half according to Town Accountant Kelli Pontbriand. Finance Committee member Sarah Malanson told the group that there was an outstanding amount of \$21,000 for unpaid water bills. The water department

can place a lien on the water user’s real estate; that prevents an owner from selling their property until the water bills are paid. The Select Board will follow up with the Water Commission.

Chair Jackie Coury brought to the board’s attention the outstanding work the town’s Volunteer Fire Department did, and all the other mutual aid departments as well for putting out the fire at the westbound service plaza. “Kudos to those guys,” she said.

Eversource has asked the board for a possible easement on town property for guy wires for utility poles. Select Board may ask for authority from the town to allow this.

Most of the two-hour meeting was devoted to budget review.

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

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WILLIAMSTOWN

Alexis Goodin becomes curator of decorative arts

WILLIAMSTOWN – The Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., announce the appointment of Alexis Goodin as the Curator of Decorative Arts.

“Alexis is an integral part of the Clark’s curatorial team and she has brought extraordinary rigor, insight and care to the study and presentation of our decorative arts collections,” said Esther Bell, Deputy Director and Robert and Martha Berman Lipp Chief Curator of the Clark. “Her deep institutional knowledge and scholarly excellence make her uniquely suited to steward this area of our collection.”

Having served for over more than two decades at the Clark, Goodin has played a vital role in shaping the interpretation, presentation, and scholarship of the Clark’s decorative arts collections. Her work in this field began in 2000, when she served as co-curator of A Fresh and Large Assortment: American Silver from the Burrows Collection.

Since that time, she worked closely with Kathleen Morris, the Clark’s former Sylvia and Leonard Marx Director of Collections and Exhibitions, Curator of Decorative Arts, on expansive reviews of the Clark’s porcelain, glass and silver holdings, contributing to both scholarly research and public-facing interpretation, including the 2017 openings of the Lauzon Glass Study Gallery and the Henry Morris and Elizabeth H. Burrows Gallery of American Decorative Arts. The Burrows Gallery houses the Clark’s collection of early American paintings and furniture in addition to its exceptional Burrows collection of American silver.

Goodin was the co-curator of Orchestrating Elegance: Alma-Tadema and



Alexis Goodin

Design (2017), an exhibition that explored the intersections of fine and decorative arts in the late nineteenth century. She was also a key member of the team that reinterpreted objects and developed new interpretive labels for the Burrows Gallery of American Decorative Arts, installed in the fall of 2022, intended to deepen visitor engagement with the collection.

In addition to her work with decorative arts, Goodin’s curatorial practice reflects a sustained interest in women artists and social history. She curated the Clark’s summer 2025 exhibition, A Room of Her Own: Women Artist-Activists in Britain, 1875-1945, which examined the artistic production and cultural impact of women working across media during a period of profound social and political change.

Goodin holds a master’s degree from the Williams College/Clark Graduate Program in the history of art and a PhD, in art history from Brown University, writing her dissertation on the representation of ancient Egypt at the Sydenham Crystal Palace in South London.

“I am deeply honored to assume the role of safeguarding, displaying, and growing the Clark’s spectacular collection of decorative arts,” said Goodin. “I have worked closely with these collections for years, and I look forward to highlighting the richness of the Clark’s holdings of silver, porcelain, glass, furniture, and other works in new and relevant ways, making them accessible to our publics.”

As Curator of Decorative Arts, Goodin will continue to advance research, steward the collections, and develop exhibitions centered on the Clark’s collection of decorative arts.

Clark Art Institute offers special gallery tour May 18

WILLIAMSTOWN – This spring, the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., offers Meet Me at the Clark, a free gallery talk program designed specifically for people living with dementia and their care partners.

A tour will be held on Monday, May 18 from 1-4 p.m.(when the museum is closed to the public). They meet in the Manton Research Center reading room.

Those living with dementia and their care partners join specially trained educators for guided, open-ended conversations about art and how it celebrates shared humanity. This program provides a calm, caring environment in which dementia patients and their caregivers have private access to the Clark’s galleries to enjoy the benefits of sharing art together.

Advance registration is required and capacity is limited. For accessibility questions or to register, people may call the Education Department at 413-458-0563. Accompanying care partners must also register. For more information, people may visit events.clarkart.edu.

First Sunday program ends May 3

WILLIAMSTOWN – The Clark Art Institute’s First Sunday Free program concludes for the season on Sunday, May 3, offering free admission from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

In connection with Mental Health Awareness Month, this month’s focus is on art and wellness. Whether visitors explore the galleries or wander the grounds, there are many ways to access the benefits of engaging with art. From 1-4 p.m., people have a variety of experiences including drop-in art-making; gallery activities; a guided, mindful walk on the campus; a meditative sound bath led by mental health practitioner, Shannon Toye and more, all exploring the therapeutic dimensions of art and nature.

The day comes to a close with a 4 p.m. concert by Williamstown’s own Misty Blues, 2019 International Blues Challenge finalist. Misty Blues has been performing original blues with hints of jazz, soul, funk and tent revival gospel since 1999.

Admission and activities are free. Select activities require registration and have limited capacity. People may sign up on the day of the event at the welcome table in the Clark Center, 25 South St., admissions lobby. For accessibility questions, people may call 413 458 0570. For more information, people may visit events.clarkart.edu.

Family programs are generously supported by Allen & Company.

REGION

Northeast gas price drop a penny

Northeast pump prices are easing somewhat as oil and gas markets respond to shifting sentiments about when the war with Iran will end.

Oil prices fell about 10% by the close of markets on Friday after Iran announced it was reopening the Strait of Hormuz to tanker traffic. With the possibility of renewed peace talks, West Texas Intermediate dipped below \$90 a barrel on the prospect of oil freely flowing through the critical shipping channel for the first time in more than seven weeks. But renewed escalation over the weekend sent crude prices climbing by about 5% in weekend trading.

Domestically, inventories of both crude oil and gasoline are tightening due to healthy demand and record exports of American oil and gas. U.S. gasoline stockpiles fell by 6.3 million barrels last week, the ninth straight week of declines, as demand climbed 500,000 barrels a day to reach a seasonally-strong 9.09 million barrels a day, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Meanwhile, total exports of oil, diesel and gasoline jumped by 1.03 million barrels a day, the EIA reported, settling at 12.75 million barrels a day. That figure broke the previous record set in 1991 by 580,000 barrels as countries around the world impacted by the lack of oil and gas exports from the Persian Gulf turn to the U.S. to address product shortfalls.

“While recent declines in pump prices might be encouraging to see, significant uncertainty will loom over petroleum markets for the duration of the conflict in the Middle East,” said Mark Schieldrop, senior spokesperson for AAA Northeast. “Despite higher gas prices, Americans don’t appear to be driving less: demand has been trending above year-ago levels since the war began.”

The average gas price in Massachusetts is down 1 cent from last week (\$3.96), averaging \$3.95 per gallon. Today’s price is 30 cents higher than a month ago (\$3.65) and \$1 higher than this day last year (\$2.95). Massachusetts’s average gas price is 9 cents lower than the national average.

AAA Northeast’s April 20 survey of fuel prices found the current national average down 8 cents from last week (\$4.12), averaging \$4.04 per gallon. Today’s national average price is 13 cents higher than a month ago (\$3.91) and 89 cents higher than this day last year (\$3.15).

Today, Oklahoma and Kansas have the lowest prices in the nation at \$3.37 and \$3.47, respectively. California and Hawaii hold the highest prices in the nation this week at \$5.83 and \$5.67, respectively. Massachusetts holds the 19th place on the list of highest gas prices in the nation.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.9 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, financial and auto-related services.



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PITTSFIELD

MassDEP penalizes Pittsfield power plant

PITTSFIELD – The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection issued a \$21,500 penalty to Pittsfield Generating Company, LP, for violating the emission limits of its operating permit for the facility located at 235 Merrill Road in Pittsfield.

Under Massachusetts’ air permit regulations, emission limits are put in place to restrict the number of specified pollutants that industrial facilities release into the atmosphere. The company, as required by its operating permit, reported deviations of its hourly nitrogen oxide emission limit, which occurred twice in July 2025 and a deviation of its hourly ammonia emission limit, which occurred once in December 2025.

“Rigorous compliance with state air regulations requires constant

and careful diligence,” said Michael Gorski, director of MassDEP’s Western Regional Office in Springfield. “Significant penalties are imposed to hold parties accountable and deter future noncompliance.”

Under the terms of MassDEP’s consent order, the company agreed to pay the \$21,500 penalty and to conduct operating training to prevent a recurrence of violations. Since the violation, the company initiated corrective actions.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s mission is to protect and enhance the Commonwealth’s natural resources: air, water, and land, to provide for the health, safety and welfare of all people and to ensure a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Downtown Pittsfield holds annual meeting May 14

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. will hold their annual meeting on Thursday, May 14 from 8:30-10 a.m. in the Common Room at the Zion Lutheran Church, 74 First St.

Tours of the First will be available directly after

the meeting. Downtown Pittsfield will be honoring Jay Santangelo, The First and the legacy of Marshall Raser.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Huntington Water and Sewer Notice of Public Hearing

The Water and Sewer Commissioners of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **Monday, May 13, 2026, beginning at 6:00 PM** in Stanton Hall regarding the FY2027 Water and Sewer Rates. Additionally, A notice of the FY2027 Rates have been mailed and are posted at the Town of Huntington Hall and the Website, Post Office, Moltenbrey’s Market, B&D Variety, Searle Road Fire Station and the Huntington Library.

Water and Sewer Commissioners
H. Daniel Oliveira
Sue Fopiano
Karon Hathaway

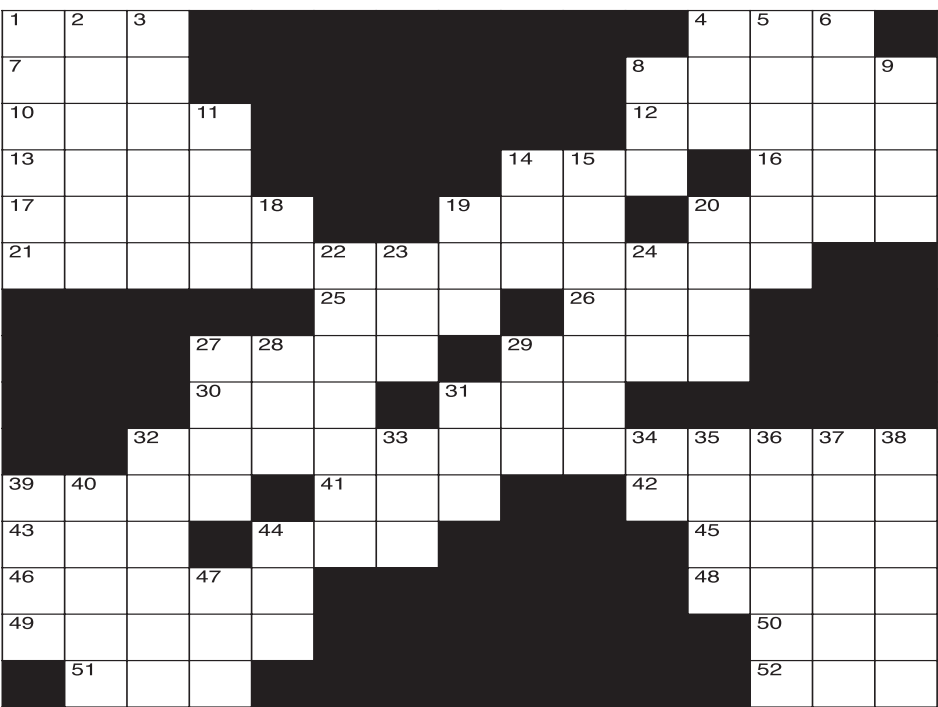
04/23, 04/30/2026

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- 3
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Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



- CLUES ACROSS**

 - 1. Purchase
 - 4. British news organization
 - 7. Midway between northeast and east
 - 8. Language specialist group
 - 10. Fancy automobile
 - 12. Small loop or series of loops
 - 13. Exploiter
 - 14. Don't know when yet
 - 16. Group of languages
 - 17. One who's finished
 - 19. After B
 - 20. Angled
 - 21. A place to adopt pets
 - 25. Swiss river
 - 26. Young boy
- 27. Unexciting
 - 29. American comedian
 - 30. Peyton's little brother
 - 31. Corporate higher-up
 - 32. "All in the Family" star
 - 39. Strike something forcefully
 - 41. Up in the air (abbr.)
 - 42. Clay earth pigments
 - 43. Means to record brain activity
 - 44. Small constellation
 - 45. Embraces
 - 46. Brief description
 - 48. Exclude
 - 49. White (French)
 - 50. Insect
 - 51. A major division of geological time
- CLUES DOWN**

 - 1. Type of whale
 - 2. In tune
 - 3. A citizen of Yemen
 - 4. Actress Ling
 - 5. One who supports
 - 6. Circus performer
 - 8. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
 - 9. Quantitative fact
 - 11. Utah city
 - 14. Where a golfer begins
 - 15. Attendant
 - 18. The ancient Egyptian sun god
 - 19. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
 - 20. Benedictine monk
 - 22. Not turbulent
- 23. Car mechanics group
 - 24. Buffer used in chemistry
 - 27. Fall heavily
 - 28. Pie ___ mode
 - 29. The Brits love it
 - 31. Children's TV channel (abbr.)
 - 32. Jacksonville footballer
 - 33. Helps little firms
 - 34. ___ and behold
 - 35. A way to resemble
 - 36. Fingers
 - 37. Excessive indulgences
 - 38. You might be an "empty" one
 - 39. "How the West Was Won" writer
 - 40. European river
 - 44. They begin the alphabet
 - 47. The body's messenger

THIS WEEK’S HOROSCOPES

- ARIES**
Mar 21/Apr 20

You approach a task with wisdom and insight this week, Aries. Your measured approach paves the way to finding a solution that will benefit all involved.
- CANCER**
Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, let others in and reap the rewards of a welcoming attitude. Your social circle expands and others embrace opportunities to spend time with you.
- LIBRA**
Sept 23/Oct 23

Romantic feelings or friendships seem to flow easily right now, Libra. Any connections you make will feel balanced and purposeful. Prioritize those who bring you the most joy.
- CAPRICORN**
Dec 22/Jan 20

Family life is going very smoothly right now, Capricorn. Stability will prevail in the days ahead. Embrace the peaceful atmosphere and encourage others to follow suit.
- TAURUS**
Apr 21/May 21

It is key to treat yourself this week, Taurus. A purchase or experience could bring you long-term joy. Just be careful about spending too much.
- LEO**
Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, start a project you have been thinking about as soon as possible, especially when the creative spark ignites. If you wait too long, the inspiration may vanish.
- SCORPIO**
Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you are engaging every bit of energy you have to go into deep work mode. You will be focused and unstoppable for the next several days. Others may not see you for a while.
- AQUARIUS**
Jan 21/Feb 18

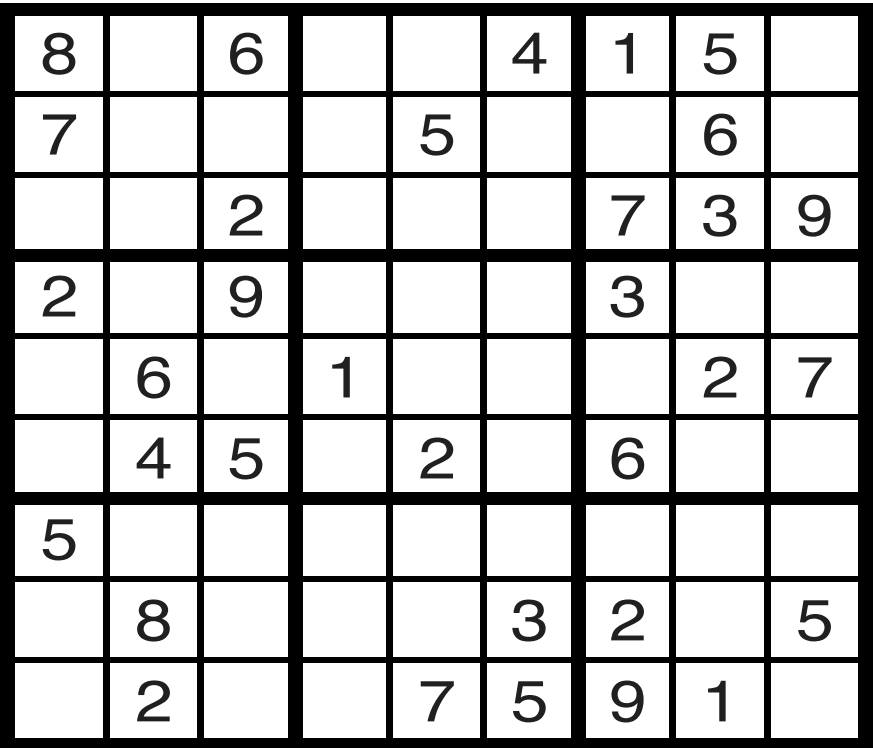
Share your perspective with all who are ready to listen to your story, Aquarius. Keep in mind that your voice carries weight and you have the ability to spur change.
- GEMINI**
May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, you are full of clever solutions more often than not. If there is a problem, you're often the one who can crack it. This will be the case this week as well; your knack is put to the test.
- VIRGO**
Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you are surprisingly relaxed about something that used to stress you out a lot. Growth looks good on you, so remain committed to any positive changes you have implemented.
- SAGITTARIUS**
Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, good news or good timing show up just when you need it. It might provide the inspiration needed to start a project you're excited about.
- PISCES**
Feb 19/Mar 20

Your financial confidence grows, Pisces. You might see a salary increase at work, so now is the time to consider implementing some notable financial changes.



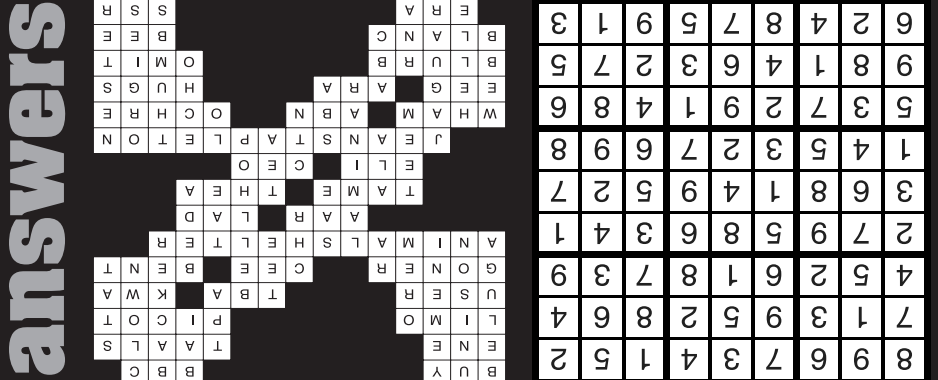
SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:

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

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STOCKBRIDGE

Berkshire Botanical Garden host SpringFest May 9

STOCKBRIDGE – This Mother’s Day weekend, Berkshire Botanical Garden, 5 West Stockbridge Road, will welcome spring with something entirely new: two beloved events happening side-by-side for the very first time.

From May 8-10, the garden invites visitors to a weekend-long celebration of plants, play and community as the 49th Annual Plants-and-Answers Plant

Sale overlaps with the second annual SpringFest on Saturday, May 9. Together, they promise a vibrant, family-friendly welcome to the growing season.

While the plant sale fills the grounds with buying opportunities and gardening know-how, SpringFest adds an extra layer of festivity on Saturday, May 9, a full day of family fun with free admission from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. A celebra-

tion of the season and community, SpringFest features food trucks and a variety of children’s activities to keep the youngest visitors happily engaged for hours. Little ones can enjoy a petting zoo, pony rides, face painting, classic lawn games, and more. A traditional Maypole dance adds a whimsical, old-world flourish to the day’s lineup.

Guests can wander the Garden’s 24-acre campus,

taking in the brilliant display of spring bulbs and flowering trees. The Visitor Center Gift Shop will be open for browsing, offering garden-inspired gifts perfect for Mother’s Day. SpringFest also serves as a moment of accomplishment and transition, as BBG hosts the graduation of the Horticulture Certificate Program. The ceremony is followed by a reception hosted by the

Herb Associates. This dedicated volunteer group has been crafting herbal goods from the Garden’s historic 1937 herb garden for more than six decades. Attendees can savor their celebrated herb-infused cookies and sip Mai Bowle, a traditional May wine punch, a fragrant, refreshing, perfect toast to spring.

By bringing both events together for the first time, Berkshire Botanical Garden

is creating an immersive weekend experience: part plant-lover’s paradise, part joyful spring fair. Whether people come to stock their garden, entertain the children, toast a graduate or simply stroll among spring blooms, the Garden will be buzzing with beauty, community and the promise of the season ahead.

People may visit BerkshireBotanical.org for more information.

Berkshire Art Center launches HeartSpace Artist residency

STOCKBRIDGE – Berkshire Art Center announces the launch of the HeartSpace Artist Residency, a new initiative that reflects its evolution into a more expansive, community-centered creative hub.

The inaugural resident, multidisciplinary artist Wes Bruce, will activate BAC’s Citizens’ Hall in Stockbridge and lead programming throughout the Berkshires beginning in May 2026. HeartSpace is a residency that supports artists in creating work and public-facing experiences that use creativity as a vital form of communica-

tion and connection. Through this program, artists engage communities of all ages in participatory, collaborative art-making.

“This residency is about creating space for people to come together through creativity,” said Dr. Laura Thompson, Executive Director of Berkshire Art Center. “Wes’s work invites participation, reflection, and connection—we’re excited to welcome the community into that experience.”

This three-part workshop series invites participants to step away from digital distraction and recon-

nect with themselves and others through art-making. Combining sculpture, poetry, conversation, and immersive practices, the program is open to both teens and adults. Sessions will take place in May, with specific dates for each group.

A central feature of the residency, The Drifting Studio is Bruce’s traveling, interactive art space. Installed at Citizens’ Hall and potentially traveling to locations across the Berkshires, it offers open-ended creative activities for all ages, encouraging experimentation and shared making.

Opening May 30,, Bruce’s immersive installation will transform both the interior and exterior of Citizens’ Hall. Featuring painted surfaces, sculptural elements, and poetic interventions, the work invites visitors to move through and engage with the space in new ways.

“I think of this work as an invitation-to slow down, notice, and create alongside one another,” said Wes Bruce. “My hope is that people feel a sense of connection and ownership in what unfolds.”

The public is invited to an opening celebration on

May 30, as part of BAC’s Art Palooza, featuring the unveiling of the installation, the arrival of The Drifting Studio, and additional community activities. The installation will remain open to the public during BAC’s regular hours.

This project is supported in part by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation’s Artist Resource Trust, with additional support from the MillTown Foundation.

Wes Bruce is a multidisciplinary artist whose work blends installation, storytelling, and community engagement. His projects emphasize

participation and collaboration and have been featured at institutions including MASS MoCA, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the Denver Children’s Museum. He lives and works in Chatham, New York.

Berkshire Art Center is a nonprofit community arts organization serving the Berkshires since 1991. With studios in Stockbridge and partnerships throughout the region, BAC provides accessible arts education and programming for children, teens, and adults, fostering creativity, connection, and lifelong learning.

GREAT BARRINGTON

Berkshire Community Land Trust presents panel to be held May 7

GREAT BARRINGTON – The Berkshire Community Land Trust will host a panel on Thursday, May 7 from 6-8 p.m. with local leaders in the Guthrie Center, 2 Van Deusenville Road.

The doors open at 5:30 p.m. for this free panel entitled “Community, Economy and Climate, a cross-disciplinary exploration of life in the Berkshires. A reception follows the panel. Moderator Katy Sparks will lead a panel of diverse non-profit experts in the fields of farming and food

production, food access, housing, local business support and environmental advocacy in a discussion about how to make life in the Berkshires sustainable for everyone.

Speakers are Brittany Ebeling (Berkshire Environmental Action Team), Jim Harwood (Community Development Corporation of the Southern Berkshires), Dennis Iodice (BerkShares) and Margaret Moulton (Berkshire Grown) will share their work and thoughts. The panel will be preceded by a brief

Berkshire Community Land Trust annual meeting. A reception will close the evening. Everyone is welcome. People need not be a member to attend, but reservations are required.

Ticket link: <https://www.simplertix.com/e/community-economy-climate-a-cross-discipli-tickets-268416>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/823434973527263>. People may call 413-429-1176 or visit www.berkshirecommunitylandtrust.org.

SUFFIELD

Garden Club May Market open

SUFFIELD, CONN. – May Market takes place on Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Phelps-Hatheway House Barn, 55 South Main St., rain or shine.

Now in its 48th year, the Suffield Garden Club’s May Market always delights. Thirty-five vendors will be offering everything from plants, garden art, pottery, house signs, metal work, wooden ware, unique wreaths, and second-hand treasures to power equipment, jewelry and food. Shoppers can patronize returning favorites as well as new additions like the Dirty

Sip, an on-trend drink that mixes soda with flavored syrup and creamer. Also new this year is live entertainment for children and adults in the Summer House just south of the main house.

Gardeners can enjoy extra benefits such as the availability of Spear Head Spades, roses and shrubs and Suffield High School’s Agriscience students with a selection of student-grown plants and herbs. The Garden Club also offers “Member Plants,” locally grown perennials and annuals at amazingly low prices and free gardening advice at the Club’s booth.

Admission is free, but don’t forget to bring cash or your checkbook since not all vendors take credit cards. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own reusable shopping bags, as well as a wagon or cart for transporting their treasures back to their cars.

The Suffield Garden Club, organized in 1934, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the beautification of Suffield. Proceeds from this event support civic beautification, high school scholarships, town conservation, horticulture education and garden therapy programs.



Send Us Your Summer Event Information

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***Be sure to indicate “Summer” in the subject line of your email.**

HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

Hikers visit Balance Rock

Balance Rock in Lanesborough is a 165-ton limestone boulder measuring 25 feet by 15 feet by 10 feet that rests three feet off the ground on top of another rock.

These measurements were well established before the twentieth century and can be found, with elaboration, in “Appendix I. Sketch of Geological History of Balance Rock” in Charles J. Palmer’s History of Town of Lanesborough. 1741-1905.

That’s not to say that these figures have gone unchallenged. In 1938, highway engineers estimated the boulder’s weight to be 365 tons. Whatever the actual weight, Balance Rock is truly amazing. The illusion of this boulder’s precariousness is simply irresistible and yet Balance Rock has withstood centuries of pesky humans trying their best to topple it.

To be sure, past writers have emphasized the rock’s precariousness over and over again. Elias Nason, the author of Gazetteer of the State of Massachusetts, wrote in 1874 that the boulder, “... is so pivoted on another rock, about three feet from the ground, that it can be easily moved and still not overturned.” “perfectly balanced it can be moved with a crowbar.” That is doubtful as Balance Rock today seems a lot sturdier and less delicately poised than how it was portrayed during the last century and a half.

Quite possibly, it has settled into a more secure position over the years. Scores of people and mischievous groups have tried to upend it and have not been able to budge it one iota except to possibly stabilize it further.

Thank you to Christy Butler, now deceased the ultimate Rockhound of Western Massachusetts and a lover of the Hilltowns for some of his research leading to the Hilltown Hikers finding this spectacular subject. Balance Rock State Park is a great destination for families with great trails and ginormous boulders to climb



Balance Rock is a 165 ton limestone boulder in Lanesborough. Photos courtesy of Jim Moore



A Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers strikes a pose in the same location as an older photo of Balance Rock.



These three Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers replicate an older photo take at Balance Rock.

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