

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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CHESTER

Chester on Track set for May 16

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

This year marks the 35th Annual Chester on Track, which will be held rain or shine on Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Events will be held all over the downtown area including at the Chester Railway Museum, a National Historic Landmark, on Prospect Street and on Emery Field. Parking is available at the old elementary school, at the Railway Station, on River Front Drive and along Emery Street. Organizer David Pierce said they might also have parking spaces on Emery Field.

New this year is a van for shuttle service between the various venues and exhibits throughout the day. Craig Boyer, former CONRAIL Maintenance of Way worker, is the parade marshal this year. The parade kicks off at 10 a.m. and will run down Main Street in Chester.

A craft show returns to Main Street next to the Riverside Inn. There's still time to claim a 12' x17' space, but the registration form and non-refundable registration fee of \$30 must be received by Sunday, May 10. The vendor form is on the Chester on Track Facebook page.

Several food options will be available. The Blue Caboose at the Chester Railway Station/Museum on Prospect Street will have hot dogs and grinders for sale. Local Boy Scouts will have

CHESTER ON TRACK, page 8



Wildlife rehabilitator, Tom Ricardi, holds a vulture.
Photo by Elizabeth Massa



Tom Ricardi holds a barred owl.
Submitted photo

Birds of prey program is a hoooooot

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library recently held a Birds of Prey event with wildlife rehabilitator, Tom Ricardi.

The event was held at the Chester town hall and was very successful with 116 people attending.



Children intently listen to Tom Ricardi, a wildlife rehabilitator who brought several birds of prey to a library program.
Submitted photo



Pastor Tom Crouse and his wife, Gina

Submitted photo

BLANDFORD

FCC has new pastor

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Pastor Tom Crouse began his service with the First Congregational Church of Blandford on Sunday, May 3.

He and his wife, Gina, will be in residence at the parsonage, next door to the church by the end of May.

Pastor Crouse served in the ministry for over 30 years with a passion for preaching the Gospel, strengthening the local church and developing leaders.

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BLANDFORD

Board hear projects for Bicentennial Park

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

George Reichert brought the Select Board up to date on ongoing work at Bicentennial Park.

There is a volunteer program involving members of the community, who have taken on garden care at the Main Street Park. There is money to be spent by July 1 and assessing the needs of the park.

The wall on the right-hand side deteriorated and needed to be replaced probably in the fall. Reichert said this required funds.

There are several flat stones that fell or removed and needed to be replaced.

He asked how much money was available for supplies and projects and access to the basement of the old Town Hall for supplies. According to Chair Jackie Coury there was \$8,901 available to spend, and would like him to come back to the board with costs.

Memorial bench

Mark Boomsma approached the board as a member of the Volunteer Fire Department, proposing a memorial bench for Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Ackley with plantings. He suggested the rear of Watson Park, and board member Ted Cousineau suggested a place close-

er to the front of the park, "Where the flagpole is, so people can see it," he said. He also asked Boomsma to include talking to the Historical Commission about such a bench.

Senior tax write off

The Council on Aging Senior Tax Write-off is organized and set to go according to COA Director Margit Mikuski and Assessor Michaela Smith. Coury asked if it would be possible to get it off the ground July 1.

The Finance Committee has budgeted \$15,000 for this purpose. The program is open to res-

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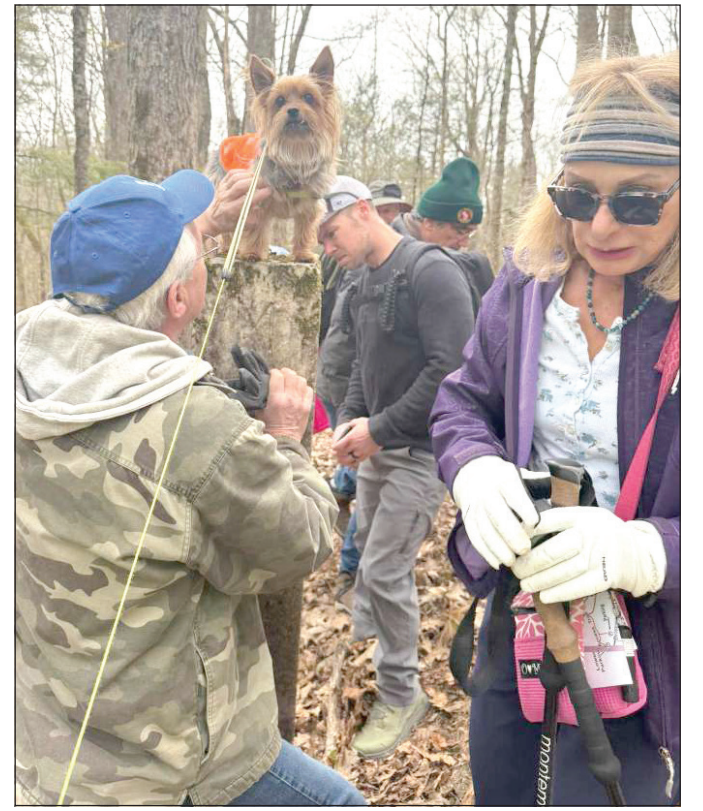
HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers group hike followed the glacial kettle loop trail/



Hilltown Hiker Chet looks at an ash tree, part of the giant groves here, showing damage by the emerald ash borer.



Submitted photo
Cybill, a canine member of the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers, perches on a town boundary stone.

Hilltown Hikers plan group hike to fish hatchery

The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers April group hike at the Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery offered hiking, a barbecue and a fly tying clinic.

The Fish Hatchery in New Marlborough is a national facility, which is unique from all others because

the water that feeds the fish here and keeps it operating is entirely spring fed making it cost effective and has some of the best of the Berkshires water quality from its aquifer.

The Friends group created great trails and are open year round to hikers even when the hatchery is closed, the trailhead is alongside Hatchery Road with parking.

Over six miles of trails here include sights to see; cellar holes, a charcoaling site, a glacial kettle and a town boundary post. The Pinnacle trail is the steepest trail offerings a gradual rise with switchbacks climbing to the "Pinnacle," which overlooks Beartown State Forest and Dry Hill.

Most of the trails here offer something unique including quartzite boulders and views from above the glacial kettle. A tree stand of enormous ash trees still stands here as well.

The Berkshire National Fish Hatchery was established along the Konkapot River in the late nineteenth centu-

ry by Dr. Samuel Camp. He selected the site for its immediate proximity to the spring at the base of the mountain that flowed through a 10-inch pipe and ran a cool 48 degrees year-round.

Much of Dr. Camp's original vision and structure remains today. The Berkshire National Fish Hatchery is situated on 148 acres of forested land, which is the source of a pristine aquifer, supplying 200 gallons per minute of the pure oxygen-rich water trout love through various pools.

The woodland trails that surround the aquifer are home to many diverse species of wildlife, making the hatchery a special place for learning about not only fish culture, but also about the natural history of the Berkshires. Along the Konkapot River, the old stone pools can still faintly be seen.

The Berkshire National Fish Hatchery supports the restoration of lake trout populations in the Lower Great Lakes by supplying lake trout eggs to other federal hatcheries and rearing native brook trout for stocking in local waterways to support recreational fishing and educational programs.

They operate under the supervision of the USFWS and the Berkshire Hatchery Foundation to support the restoration of lake trout populations in the Lower Great Lakes by supplying lake trout

eggs to other federal hatcheries. These eggs are hatched, grown and stocked into Lakes Ontario and Erie.

The restoration efforts are part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. They produce upwards of 1.2 million fertilized Seneca lake wild strain lake trout every year. The conservation efforts both enhance the lake trout population and habitat, but also provide recreational fishing opportunities to anglers in the area.

Learn how to fly tie and bring the family for more great events sponsored by the Friends of the Berkshire Fish Hatchery. Details at www.hatcheryfriends.org and on social media. The friends group sponsors fishing derby's and an open house Saturday Aug. 8 from 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and

more. To further understand how our this tiny little hatchery is important for the future of lake trout in the Great Lakes, there is a very good documentary film called "The Fish Thief: Mystery of the Great Lakes" available on Amazon Prime. The Hilltown Hikers thank the Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery for hosting an exceptional day of hiking and learning about the hatchery.

The glacial kettle loop trail.jpgChet at an Ash Tree, part of the giant groves here, showing the damage by the Emerald Ash Borer.jpg

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