

Country Journal

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GATEWAY INDUCTS NINE INTO NHS



Senior, left, and junior members of the Dana O. Webber Chapter of the National Honor Society at Gateway Regional School. Nine juniors joined the Chapter in an induction ceremony held on Wednesday, May 6. See story page 9. Submitted photo

HUNTINGTON

Postal changes impacts town

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Huntington Board of Assessors met with the town's Select Board at their Wednesday, May 6 meeting, in an effort to get to the bottom of a change in postal regulations that has created problems for the town's residents and departments.

Chairman Roger Booth and Selectmen Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh met with Principal Assessor Harold Scheid, Assessors Lorraine Wickland and Christine Stochlinski and Mikaila Smith from the Regional Resource Group on the issues.

Booth explained that the town is having multiple problems with postmarks and mailing addresses. According to him, the U.S. Post Office instituted a change effective Dec. 24, 2025. Mail is no longer post marked at the Huntington post office. They are now date-stamped when they reach the postal distribution center in Hartford, which he discovered can take up to six days from putting it in the mailbox.

This delay is affecting the timeliness of tax payments, dog license paper-

POSTAL, page 2

BLANDFORD

Tax collector mails excise demand bills

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera updated the board on a tax collector's office issue.

Excise demand bills were mailed out on March 19, which included a \$30 demand fee and interested calculated through the due date, April 2. These were mailed in the Southwick Post Office.

No payments had been received and checking on the mailing, tax payers were only just receiving these bills. It is the tax collector's understanding that the bills were sent to Georgia before arriving at the appropriate addresses in Blandford.

Therefore, the collector has decided to allow the taxpayer to pay the total amount printed on the demand bills due April 2 before sending any forward to a collection agency. No interest will accrue.

Wildfire Preparedness Plan

Springfield Water and Sewer Commission has informed the town that will have a presentation of a Wildfire Preparedness Plan by Municipal Resources Inc. This presentation and training event is designed to strengthen wildfire response capabilities in environmentally sensitive areas with a particular focus on protecting critical drinking water resources.

Blandford has SWSC watershed land within its boundaries that protects Cobble Mountain Reservoir.

The program is set for June 4 in Westfield.

Ferrera told the board that SWSC is also working on tree removal on Herrick Road, which is not yet finished, and their (SWSC's) discussions regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems have been con-

BILLS, page 6

MIDDLEFIELD

Leonardo-Bell receives citizen award

Lois Leonardo-Bell holds her Community Citizen Award, bestowed by the Hinsdale Grange on April 13, 2026. Submitted photo



By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Lois Leonardo-Bell received the Hinsdale Grange's "Community Citizen Award" in a ceremony held at Hinsdale's First Congregational Church on April 13.

She was nominated by Middlefield resident Chris Bresnahan in appreciation for her work on improving the Middlefield Public Library since becoming Library Director. Grange President Heather Brooks presenter Leonardo-Bell with a certificate.

Many friends and neighbors attended the presentation. Bresnahan, who serves as lecturer of the Hinsdale

Grange, said that the grange gives out community service awards each year honoring someone from the members' home towns. She nominated Leonardo-Bell because the work she had done to turn the library around was truly impressive, she said.

In her speech announcing the awardee, Bresnahan said, "When Lois came on board as Middlefield Public Library Director, the library had been languishing-irregular hours, with few active patrons and few programs to attract community members. Now it is a bustling, welcoming, and friendly place, with an active and engaged group of volunteers, intriguing book

AWARD, page 3

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Gateway Regional rethinks student achievement

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

When the state voted to end Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System as a requirement for high school graduation, it gave school districts the option of designing their own measures of success.

Many high schools chose to continue to use MCAS as their requirement. Gateway Regional School, in the midst of redesigning education through its work with the Barr Foundation, used it as a chance to forge a different path. "We saw it as an opportunity to define what competency really meant," said Dr. William Sullivan, principal at GRS. "We used it to empower students to share with us what they wanted their last couple of years of high school to look like."

It's part of a bigger, broader redesign of education at GSR, which starts in seventh grade and eighth

grade with a new exploratory program. Students choose two exploratories a quarter (eight per year) that take place during the last block of each day. Students can select from a variety of options.

Some may have a career focus, such as introduction to engineering, tourism, welding or early education and care. Others might have a life skills focus, such as cooking or how to get your learner's permit and maintain a car.

Students, who discover something they feel really passionate about can sequence a series of related exploratories together to design a "Gateway." This happens when students complete four related exploratories that partner to fulfill something akin to a college minor.

For example, a student could complete exploratories in video shorts, digital art, drawing and one other related exploratory to earn



A reinvention of education is underway at Gateway Regional School, thanks to guidance and funding through the Barr Foundation. Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

an "Art Gateway."

Sullivan said they can even finish their Gateway in ninth or tenth grade. If they are still passionate about that field, they can dig deeper into further high school classes or opportunities in that field.

The sophomore year

is when students across the Commonwealth take the MCAS exam in English, mathematics, science and social studies. Passing the tenth grade exam was the previous measure of student achievement needed for a diploma.

At Gateway, this year's

sophomores each gave a "demonstration of learning" to a panel of teachers, staff and administrators. This presentation includes six elements: a description of courses completed in ninth and tenth grade, evidence

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CHESTER

Church honors Rev. Howland's 90th birthday

By John Nolet
Guest Columnist

CHESTER – How better to celebrate ones 90th birthday than to hold a potluck supper party.

Well, that's just what happened for Pastor Emerita, Miriam Howland, on Saturday April 18. The idea was cooked up by Cindy Loisel, lead deacon of the First Congregational Church of Chester and her husband Rick Loisel.

The church congregation supported this idea fully. Keeping this potluck supper party a surprise for Miriam was quite an undertaking as the congregation is very interactive throughout the week by phone and e-mails.

One group e-mail slip-up could spill the beans. Well, a surprise it was for Miriam. The church hall was filled with some eighty family members and friends she had made over her many years as pastor and community activist.

The many dishes of foods filled a buffet fit for royalty. After a blessing, there was enough food for folks to go back for seconds



Rev. Miriam Howland stands by her 90th birthday cake. Submitted photo

and thirds if they so choose.

As most birthday parties go, there was the singing of "Happy Birthday to You" and the traditional cake with the two candles, 9 and 0. It was truly an evening of fun and celebration.

Beginning in 1977 Miriam was licensed as a pastor and preached in area churches throughout the Pioneer Valley region. Miriam was pastor of the First Congregational Church of Chester on Skyline Trail for seven years beginning in 2004.

Having been in seminary in Boston for three years, Miriam was ordained in the First Congregational Church of Southampton in 1996 and served as the minister of visitation there until 2004.

In 2000, yes, the year of the year 2000, Miriam was asked to be interim pastor at the Chester Church for one year. She fell in love with the church and the congregation.

When the opportunity came to return as pastor full time, Miriam was thrilled to take on the assignment.

Having retired from being an active pastor in United Church of Christ in

2011, Miriam with her husband Richard of 69 years, and daughter Anne Howland have been faithful attendees at service of this Chester Hill congregation.

Being an accomplished musician, Miriam was the Minister of Music directing both the children's and adult choirs for 35 years at the First Congregational Church of Southampton. She often plays the piano for Sunday service on Chester Hill when needed. Daughter Anne Howland, also a talented musician, sings spiritual solos for holiday services and special occasions.

Even in her retirement, Miriam will volunteer to lead the Chester Hill congregation on occasions when current pastor, Susan Borsella is on vacation, or away for other personal matters. Over the last three years of Sundays, Miriam has led an afternoon service at Armbrook Village in Westfield. This service is composed of folks of many religious faiths, who are unable to attend a church service. Miriam's calling continues in the service of many faiths and so appreciated by all.

Hamilton Library holds book and bake sale

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library, 15 Middlefield Road, Suite 7, holds their annual book and bake sale on Saturday, May 16 during Chester On Track.

Baked goods maybe dropped off at their tent on that day. There will also be a tag sale on the premises. Their special museum will also be open to the public. They have a collection of crystals from around the world and an ancient dinosaur print.



WORTHINGTON

Worthington Town Clerk announces annual town election results

WORTHINGTON – Three hundred fourteen voters cast ballots of the 1,036 registered voters in the Annual Town Election held Saturday, May 2.

With just over 30% voter turnout and the only contest on the ballot, Deb Rocque,

candidate for re-election, won another three year term to the Select Board with 175 votes. Her opponent Steven Storm received 127.

Gary Ouimet, a candidate for re-election ran unopposed and received 279 votes for a three year

term as Assessor.

Running unopposed was Diana Brenner, a candidate for re-election to the Board of Health with 286 votes. Pat Kennedy, candidate for re-election for Cemetery Commissioner, was unopposed and

received 291 votes.

Kate Bavelock, candidate for re-election to a five year term on Planning Board received 280 votes. Ron Sampson, candidate for re-election to a three year term as Constable, was unopposed and

received 295 votes.

Also unopposed and both candidates for re-election were Benjamin Brown, three year term as Tree Warden with 296 votes and Kevin O'Connor, three year term as Moderator, with 283 votes.

Nicole Schulze won a three year term to Worthington School Committee with 274 votes. Voters also re-elected Randy Zucco with 264 votes and Joseph Boudreau with 270 votes for two positions on the Finance Committee.

HUNTINGTON

POSTAL

from page 1

work and mail-in voting, to name a few. There have been numerous complaints from town residents, who have been charged fines and late fees, which might actually stem from this new postal regulation.

Another issue concerns mailing addresses that are coming through on property transactions, such as deeds. There are currently numerous residents, who are not receiving things like tax bills because their address is not recognized by the post office. As an example, Booth said that an item from the Town Clerk might be addressed to 27 Mountain View while the same resident's tax bill could be addressed to 27 Mountain View Drive. One of those pieces of mail, he said, might not be coming through. He asked the assessors to check with the post office and see if they are finding that their feeds are not giving them accurate information. "I want to understand the system because it's broken. If it is

at our end, I want to fix it," Booth said. "If it is at their end, we need to go to our legislators and have them fix it."

In the absence of Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin, Town Clerk Michele Fieldstad-Booth took the meeting minutes. With Peloquin out on medical leave, a number of the old business items were passed over until her return.

Police Chief Brian Kowal reported on work underway to enact a winter parking ban. It was originally planned as a warrant article for voter approval at the coming Annual Town Meeting on June 1, but the town's counsel has informed Kowal that it only has to be accepted by the Select Board and posted in the local newspaper. Kowal submitted his final draft of the bylaw, which is aligned with the town's winter parking ban bylaw.

Next steps are to outline a procedure for having a car

towed that is parked illegally and put a bid out for a towing company. Kowal will serve as the point person to work this out. Roger Booth moved to accept the bylaw without a warrant article as per legal recommendation, which passed unanimously.

Booth then moved to accept Kowal's final version of the bylaw, which also had unanimous approval.

Kowal also announced that he has submitted two policies for select board approval: one on code of conduct and another on internal affairs investigations. Kowal explained that both policies are required by the state; this item will be on the May 20 meeting agenda under new business.

Highway Superintendent Brad Curry declined to meet in executive session to discuss two time cards that were incorrectly signed off and approved by Curry. Over the discussion, Curry explained that the errors had occurred at the beginning of

the town's new time sheet system and Curry had signed without looking at them closely.

One time sheet concerned Curry's hours, the other a different highway department staff member.

Although Curry is a salaried employee, he completes a time sheet because the town has been working on salary adjustments and needed to have a better understanding of actual hours worked by exempt employees. Roger Booth said this started two years ago so the town could bring up salaries where needed, not only out of fairness but also to be at a level to attract new key staff if someone left.

One of the timesheets in question showed Curry working a fourteen hour day when he had actually worked four. While he did not write up that time sheet, he did sign it-an oversight that he freely admitted to several times during the meeting.

McVeigh pointed As

a way to eliminate future errors, Curry said that time cards and a time clock would be a better option than hand-written timesheets and his employees would not object to that.

But Treasurer Ryan Mailloux was unable to find one that would work across all town departments; Curry said that they are looking at a table/computer program to log time worked.

While all three selectmen had varying opinions about an appropriate action on the matter, they went through several variations before landing on one that would pass the majority. Booth's motion to put a written warning into Curry's personnel file failed to get a second. Hathaway's motion to terminate Curry for falsifying a document, saying he didn't think Curry was even at the highway yard on the day in question, also failed to get a second. McVeigh moved for a verbal reprimand, which is documented in writing

in the personnel file, but is an earlier step in the disciplinary process, passed with Hathaway voting no.

In other business, the board approved a change to the landscaping quote from Limited Budget, who had not included the town cemetery in their original bid. The new three-year contract will run \$13,465 for FY '27; \$14,240 for FY '28 and \$15,015 for FY '29.

The Select Board approved two highway department employees each rolling 20 hours of vacation time into FY '27. They also approved Karen Lucas as the town's representative to the Hilltown Community Ambulance governing committee, replacing Fire Chief Josh Ellinger, who is stepping down from this role.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday May 20 and Booth said he hopes to focus solely on the ATM warrant/budget at that meeting.

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EARLY DEADLINES

In observance of Memorial Day, there will be an **EARLY AD DEADLINE**

To advertise, place your ad no later than **NOON**

Thursday, May 21

– Thank you!

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MIDDLEFIELD

Gallery and Sculpture Trail opens May 15

MIDDLEFIELD – Sculptor Andrew DeVries announces the season opening of DeVries Fine Art and the Sculpture Trail located at 36 East River Road.

The gallery and trail are open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. beginning Friday, May 15 and continue through Sunday, Oct. 18.

Forty up to life size sculptures are installed

along the trail complemented with poetry by various writers. The path traverses through meadows and wooded groves along the middle branch of the Westfield River.

This is open to the public. The Sculpture Trail is free, but donations are welcomed. For more information and directions people may visit the website at andrewdevries.com or call 413-238-7755.

AWARD

from page 1

clubs and brand new furniture set up in an inviting circle with coffee and tea makings close at hand. People talk about books, share the titles of their favorites-and it seems the whole town is actively talking about and vying for the latest hot library book. The foot traffic and loans of books and materials have grown exponentially."

Bresnahan went on to describe the work undertaken by Leonardo-Bell when she became director. "One of the biggest tasks Lois undertook was shepherding the Middlefield library through the arduous process of becoming part of CWMARS (and joining the 21st century). Her great, sardonic sense of humor and her ability to attract and retain engaged volunteers came in especially handy during this process of weeding, researching, and combing through every book in the library and every data entry in our software. She rearranged the shelves, discarded outdated books, and generally made a somewhat shabby space inviting and usable," Bresnahan said.

Leonardo-Bell reported that the previous library director had been very ill. Although she had tried very hard to keep the library functioning, it was beyond her. She resigned and Leonardo-Bell was appointed in 2019 and began to renovate the library.

Joining CW Mars was an enormous project, she said. "That was

so much work. All the books needed to be recatalogued and have new identification labels. We have 6,000 books and I never could have done it alone. Library patrons showed up to volunteer for anything that needed to be done. They were all amazing."

As a result of joining CW Mars and the revamped library, patron numbers have grown and people often just come to the library to hang out and enjoy company. In a small, remote town like Middlefield, that is a huge asset.

"Libraries aren't solely about books, they're about serving the community in any way that makes life better. That might mean all the newly released books or just a chance to sit and visit," Leonardo-Bell said.

She was quick to mention how supportive the town of Middlefield had been of the library. "This year, they noticed how shabby our hand-me-down furniture was and they gave us a budget for new furniture! Our little one-room library has new furniture and all the latest books! What more can a Librarian ask for?" she exclaimed.

"I was truly honored to receive this award," said Leonardo-Bell. "The Grange has a history of community service and to be recognized by the Hinsdale Grange was an honor. It's really sweet to be recognized for doing something that you love."

CUMMINGTON

Sheep & Woolcraft Fair set for May 23-24

CUMMINGTON – The Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair Committee announced that the 50th annual Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair will also mark the final chapter of this cherished event.

The 50th and final Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair takes place Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24 at the Cummington Fairgrounds in Cummington. After half a century of celebrating fiber arts, shepherding and rural heritage, organizers have made the difficult decision to conclude the fair following this milestone year.

Founded in 1976, the Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair has grown into a beloved regional tradition, drawing thousands of visitors, artisans, farmers, and fiber enthusiasts from across New England and beyond. Known for its vibrant marketplace, sheep shearing demonstrations, workshops, and community spirit, the fair has played a vital role in preserving and promoting the region's agricultural and craft traditions.

"This 50th fair is both a celebration and a farewell," said Lisa Dachinger, co-chair of the MSWCF. "We are



incredibly proud of what this event has meant to so many people over the years. While it's bittersweet to say goodbye, we are committed to making this final fair the most memorable one yet."

The 50th Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair will feature many of the traditions attendees have come to love, including: live sheep shearing and herding demonstrations; fiber arts demonstrations and hands-on activities; a curat-

ed marketplace of local wool, yarn, and handcrafted goods; livestock exhibitions and educational displays and food vendors and family-friendly entertainment

Organizers are also planning special commemorative events and exhibits to honor the fair's rich history and the generations of farmers, artisans, and volunteers who have contributed to its success.

The decision to conclude the fair was made after care-

ful consideration of evolving logistical challenges, volunteer capacity and long-term sustainability. The committee expressed deep gratitude to the community for its decades of support.

For more information, including event details and schedules, people may visit <https://masheepwool.org> or follow <https://www.facebook.com/masheepwoolcraftfair> or <https://www.instagram.com/masheepwoolcraftfair/>.

WESTHAMPTON

Westhampton Public Library holds concert series

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library's Concert Planning Committee announces the lineup of local bands for the 2026 Field of Dreams concert series.

Concerts take place in

the backyard of the library. People should bring a lawn chair or blanket

All concerts take place on Fridays at 6 p.m. In the case of inclement weather, concerts will be held at Town Hall, 1 South Road.

Friday concert schedule includes: June 26 The Wildcat O'Halloran Band, July 10 Zydeco Connection, July 24 Little House Blues, Aug. 7 The O-Tones and Aug. 21 The Gaslight Tinkers

Sponsors for the series

are Friends of Westhampton Library; Westhampton Cultural Council; Easthampton Savings Bank; Greenfield Cooperative Bank; Florence Savings Bank and Marek Builders, Inc.

STOCKBRIDGE

Grange holds dinner May 17

STOCKBRIDGE – The Stockbridge Grange holds a community dinner on Sunday, May 17 with take out only and pickup from noon-1:30 p.m.

The dinner features stuffed chicken breast, mashed potatoes and vegetables with dessert choices of chocolate cream or lemon meringue pie.

Dinner is \$17 per person. Pick up is at the Stockbridge Grange Hall, 51 Church St. Orders may be made by calling 413-

243-1298.

Grange dinners are held to raise money for non-profit projects and building maintenance.

NORTHAMPTON

Gallery hosts student artwork

NORTHAMPTON – The JFK Middle School students art will be on exhibit in the Hosmer Gallery located at the Forbes Library, 20 West St.

There will be 300 plus works of art by students in sixth through eighth grades now through Friday, May 29.

PRAYER TO ST. JUDE

Oh holy St. Jude, Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor to all who invoke your name in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present urgent petition: (mention your request here). In return, I promise to make your name known and cause your name to be invoked. St. Jude, pray for us and all who invoke thy aid. Amen. C.D.

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GUEST COLUMN



I'm still working; why didn't I get a higher Social Security benefit?

Dear Rusty:

I began collecting benefits at age 72 and am now 78.

Since that time, I have continued to work and have contributed over \$40,000 to Social Security over the last six years. At the time of my retirement, I was informed that the Social Security Administration would review my contributions annually and replace lower-earning years from my 35-year record with my current higher-earning years.

Despite my current annual income exceeding \$100,000, I have not seen an increase in my benefit amount over the past six years. I recently met with an SSA representative, who confirmed that my benefits are being reviewed annually but did not provide specific details or evidence of these adjustments. Could you please advise me on how to formally verify that my benefits are being accurately reviewed and updated to reflect my continued contributions?

Signed: Collecting and Still Working

Dear Collecting:

For information, your contributions from Federal Insurance Contributions Act payroll taxes to Social Security over the last six years are not what determines if you get an increase to your monthly SS benefit.

Although you contributed to SS since you started receiving SS benefits, those contributions do not affect your monthly SS benefit. Your monthly SS benefit is based only on the highest inflation-adjusted 35 years of earnings over your lifetime. And for your monthly benefit to change, your current earnings each year would need to replace at least one of those 35 historical, inflation-adjusted year earnings.

We regularly hear from those who do benefit from SSA's regular review of work earnings after they start receiving monthly SS benefits, and our Advisory staff includes two individuals with a combined 70 years of service with the Social Security Administration. Thus, we are comfortable saying that SSA does, in fact, review your earnings annually to see if your monthly SS payment should be higher.

From a process standpoint, SSA receives your annual earnings information from the IRS (i.e., directly from your annual tax return) by mid-year annually, after which SSA evaluates your recent earnings to see if an increase in your monthly SS benefit is warranted. If so, that increase is automatically applied, usually around October each year and you are paid the extra amount retroactively to the beginning of the year.

What you may not realize is that your lifetime earnings (your historical earnings)

are adjusted for inflation. This is a good thing, because that means your current monthly SS benefit is calculated using today's dollar values for your past earnings, rather than the actual money amounts you originally earned and received.

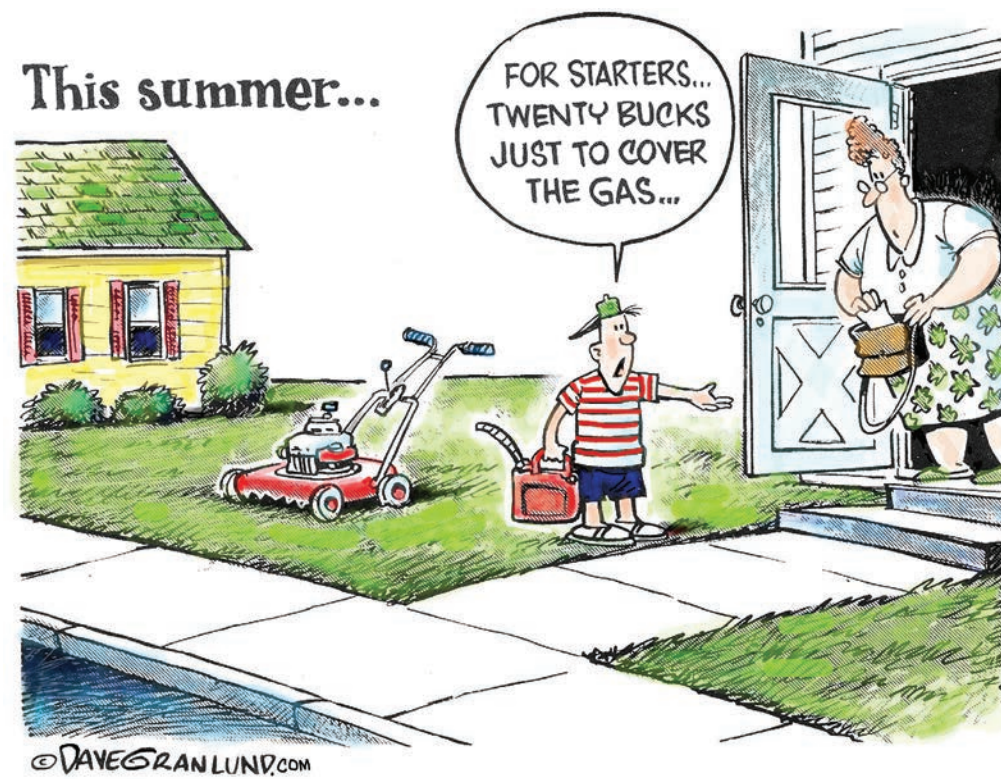
For example, \$50,000 of 1990 earnings would be worth about \$125,000 today. Which also means that those 1990 earnings would only yield a higher current Social Security benefit if your recent earnings were more than \$125,000. And this is true for all 35 years of lifetime earnings used to calculate your current monthly Social Security benefit.

The best way for you to ensure that you are getting the right monthly benefit amount is to first obtain your lifetime earnings history from Social Security. This is most easily obtained through your online "my Social Security" account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. If you don't have an online account set up, you can also request an "Earnings Statement" by calling Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 (or call your local SS field office to request it). Next, I suggest you use Social Security's "Online Benefits Calculator" explained and available at this link: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/AnyApplet.html>

If, after this, you believe you should be getting a higher monthly SS benefit because of your recent earnings, you can again contact SSA and tell them you believe they did not properly adjust your current SS benefit for your most recent earnings. Following that, you can submit a "Request for Reconsideration" (form SSA-561) which will result in a full separate review of your case by an independent SSA person, followed (some months later) by a formal written determination on your assertion. If you received a letter from SSA because of your previous meeting with them, include a copy of that letter with your "Request for Reconsideration."

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

Rhubarb, a perennial fruit worth growing

Recently I was chatting with a coworker who has a dozen varieties of rhubarb.

Yes, rhubarb. He asked if I wanted a division or two.

Although I love all things old, and this fruit (yes, fruit) is considered about as old-fashioned as they come, I politely declined. Rhubarb and I don't particularly get along.

But, that doesn't mean I'll knock anyone who can eat it and not visit the bathroom. All the more power to them.

Read on for some rhubarb trivia that just may earn you a prize on your next cruise.

Back in the day when everyone made time for baking, or baked out of necessity, rhubarb was indispensable in the garden. Today, most folks figure they can buy what they need when they long to make a strawberry-rhubarb pie or some preserves.

I say, "Why buy it, when it is so easy to grow?" And, as an added bonus, it may just out live you!

Rhubarb was featured on a cooking show and a lengthy discussion evolved between the celebrity cooks about whether it was a fruit or a vegetable. I never did hear the resolution, but did a little research of my own.

Apparently, rhubarb is a vegetable but after a court decision in 1947 it is legally a fruit and was not subject to taxation of the time.

The best time for planting rhubarb is early through mid-spring. If you are lucky enough to know someone with an established patch, it is very likely they will give you all of the divisions you need and then some.

You can also purchase roots or small potted plants from local nurseries. For an



average family of four, plan on two or three divisions.

Rhubarb will do best in a spot in the yard that is in full sun or light shade. Most gardeners locate it separately from or at one end of the main vegetable garden.

Since we are dealing with a perennial plant, think carefully about where you site it—you may have to live with your decision for decades! Amend the soil with lots of organic matter prior to planting; the richer the better.

Finished compost or aged manure fit the bill just fine, and since rhubarb prefers slightly acidic soil, you'll want to hold the lime.

If you are getting divisions from a friend's garden, ask for some from the outer portion of the patch—these roots will be the least fibrous and most eager to thrive. Keep as much soil as possible around them during transport to prevent dehydration.

If you can't transplant them the same day dig a quick hole somewhere else in the garden and "heel them in." Your other alternative would be to pot up the divisions.

In either case, water well until you can plant them attentively.

When it's time for your plants to make their way to

a permanent spot, dig holes two to three feet apart. The depth of the holes will depend on the size of the divisions you have and how big their roots are.

Plant them at the same depth they were growing in your friend's garden or in the pot you bought them in. If you are planting roots, go by the buds—they should be planted about two inches below the soil surface.

During the first growing season our emphasis should be on root building. For that reason be sure that you water well and keep weeds at bay.

Do not pick stalks until the following spring, but do break off any flower buds that form. Once your patch has established itself there is no stopping it! All you'll need to do to maintain it is provide a topdressing of compost or rotted manure each spring and weed as needed.

Of course, you will also want to pick as much as you can! No knife is needed: simply hold the stem near the base and give it a quick pull along with a gentle twist.

Use only the stem since the foliage is known to be toxic.

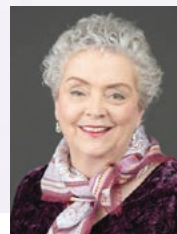
The patch will need dividing every 5-10 years; the perfect time to offer up divisions to your friends!

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.

Being an advocate in the emergency room



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column



In the emergency room, the health-care system's shortcomings are laid bare. Not enough nursing staff, too little communication, confusing interactions.

I have seen that effective advocacy, whether from a family member, friend, or professional patient advocate, can have a positive impact on emergency room

outcomes. Caregivers, who are usually familiar with their loved one's care and medical conditions, have the ability to act as advocates and perhaps make up for some of the shortcomings we find in ERs.

The tips I will outline aren't easy, and they sometimes run counter to the natural fear or even panic that accompanies a trip to the ER. But you will be doing your loved one and yourself a favor if you can remember them.

Evaluate whether going to the ER is necessary.

Patients present themselves at the emergency room with issues that could and

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Country Journal

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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.

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.

OPINION

Important Facts About Solar Farms in the Hilltowns

By Erin Matica
Guest Columnist

The majority of hilltown residents are concerned about the proposed solar farms in our area.

People have brought up some of the risks associated with solar installations like risk of fire and land and ground water contamination with toxic chemicals and heavy metals.

What no one has mentioned is the electro-magnetic radiation produced by these installations. While people call for “more studies,” the risks associated with electro-magnetic radiation have been known since the 1970’s.

In a review by Tim Boyd on David Stetzer’s “Talk on Solar Electricity” video, which can be found on YouTube, Tim states, “Solar power systems are notorious for putting radiation into the environment. It is not so much the solar panels themselves as it is the inverters that convert the Direct Current from solar panels to the 120V Alternating Current used in most homes.

Stetzer speaks of one farm where he measured radiation unique to solar power systems, but the farm did not have solar power. After some investigation, he found the culprit three miles away. When they shut off their solar power, the radiation stopped and so did the

health problems.

These issues are not new. Back in 1972, the Naval Medical Research Institute put out a report listing symptoms from radiation exposure. The dozens of symptoms included respiratory difficulties, pneumonia and heart arrhythmia.

Studies have shown that currents as low as eighteen microamps have biological effects that are relevant to cancer. The Electric Power Research Institute produced Handbook for the Assessment and Management of Magnetic Fields caused by Distribution Lines, acknowledges that “children close to power lines and power grids are more cancer prone.”

In the Spring 2025 issue of Wise Traditions, the journal of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Merinda Teller’s article “Building Vitality: It Starts with the Soil,” she discusses Maine farmers who are “considering switching from farming to solar arrays.

This fits right in with “green grabs – a land grab tactic whereby farmland is repurposed for so-called clean energy– even though both solar arrays and wind turbines contribute to even worse soil and environmental degradation. Most of the farmers who succumb to the promise of easy money for solar or wind... have no idea that in a matter of years they will be left with shredded fiberglass blades, \



scorched piles of junk ‘and worse (in the case of wind turbines) or toxic remnants like cadmium compounds, hexafluoroethane and lead from spent solar panels.”

It is reasonable that we don’t want our families, our neighbors, our land and water, our animals and wildlife to be poisoned. It is also reasonable that we don’t want our property values to plummet, when for most people their houses are a necessary investment that they may need to sell in order to retire.

These proposed solar projects will hurt all of us long term. We are considered collateral damage for the solar

company.

We, as residents of the hilltowns, will get practically nothing out of these deals, yet we are expected to assume all the risks. If the worst happens, the pittance they are paying our towns will be a drop in the bucket of the real costs to remediate the problems caused by Blue Wave Solar, not to mention the cost in human suffering. I can guarantee you that the company will be nowhere to be found to help pick up the pieces.

One of the proposed solar sites in Worthington, for example, is in the worst possible place. It is right in the middle of our watershed and

town drinking water supply. There is also a brook that runs nearby, the elementary school is just down the street and our stunningly beautiful golf course is directly across the street.

Worst of all there are many houses in the vicinity, some of which are only feet from the proposed site. Solar farms should not be allowed in residential areas. Period.

All of this leaves our local farmers between a rock and a hard place. To say that the situation is unfair is a vast understatement. However, if we ruin our farmland with unsustainable “sustainable energy” all will be lost. We

need local, state, and federal policy changes to help farmers and not leave them to be taken advantage of by predatory companies.

I did not grow up in the hilltowns, but the kind and generous people living here have adopted me as one of their own and my family too.. I will do whatever I can to protect this special, magical place and the wonderful people who live here.

To be crystal clear, solar farms are dangerous and destructive and will only harm us and our places. I encourage you all to run this solar company out of our beautiful hilltowns.

HEALTH

should be handled by a primary care doctor or urgent care center. The result, of course, is an even more overburdened emergency room.

Go to the ER when there’s:

- Chest pain or pressure (possible heart attack)
- Difficulty breathing (asthma attack, pulmonary embolism)
- Sudden numbness or weakness (stroke symptoms)
- Severe bleeding (uncontrolled, deep wounds)
- Head injuries with confusion/vomiting (possible concussion)
- Severe burn or fracture (bone protruding, major burns)
- Poisoning or overdose
- Seizure lasting more than 5 minutes

Bring a list of the patient’s current medications and allergies.

Electronic health records (EHR) have done a lot to improve coordination of care, but the various systems sometimes don’t “talk” to each other. Not only that, the medications and dosages listed in an EHR aren’t always up to date.

Keep a list of current medications, including how many milligrams are pre-

scribed and the frequency, printed out and kept in a “go bag” that you can grab on the way out the door. This can save precious moments in the ER.

Understand the triage process.

People who need immediate life-saving care, or who appear to be having heart attack or stroke, are considered Level 1 and Level 2 patients and will be seen almost immediately.

Your loved one will be evaluated and, if it’s determined they’re not in imminent danger, you likely will have to wait. If the wait feels too long, calm and courteously ask at the desk how much longer it may be.

Be able to summarize the patient’s conditions and what brought them to the ER.

The patient may be able to do this themselves, but I find they usually downplay certain things or even omit them. If your loved one has heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, allergies and previous surgeries, the clinicians need to know as soon as possible.

Have the patient’s ID and insurance card with you.

One of the first people through the door (faster probably than any doctor)

will be from admissions, and they will need information to register your loved one as a patient: photo ID and types of insurance.

Also, if you’re not the spouse or the patient is your child over the age of 18, you will need their permission to receive medical information from the clinicians. The patient can give permission verbally, but having a signed HIPAA form or durable medical power of attorney is better.

Be familiar with the patient’s preferences for care.

Some people don’t want blood transfusions. Some don’t want to be resuscitated if their heart stops beating or intubated if they stop breathing. The best way to provide this information is with a living will or advanced care directive. Bring copies with you.

Make sure your loved one is comfortable.

If they need more pillows or a heated blanket, ask for them. If it’s OK for them to drink water (they may not if the docs feel there may be a surgery), get them some. Talk to your patient about what’s going on, what’s being said to you and what they can expect.

When you hear, “We’re

admitting you,” understand what that means.

Is your patient being admitted for observation, which may have an impact on insurance coverage? Is an in-patient room available, or will they have to remain in the ER? What unit will they be admitted to, for example intensive care?

Listen carefully to the discharge instructions, ask questions and take them seriously.

The most common reason people return to the ER is not following dis-

charge instructions. This may include what activities to avoid or new medications to take. The most important instruction is often “follow up with your primary care doctor within 72 hours.” Don’t brush them off.

It’s easy to feel lost in the ER. The staff is there to help you, so speak up as an advocate and remember to say “thank you.”

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.

from page 4

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.



Chester Baptist Church

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
pvagliffe@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

BLANDFORD



The Boomsma family are shown from left, Maureen, Olivia, Mark, Doretta, Julie, Greta, Penelope and Charley. They gathered at the Council on Aging luncheon to celebrate Doretta Boomsma's birthday.

Turley Photo by Mary Kronholm

COA holds birthday party and more

BLANDFORD – Unbeknownst to Doretta Boomsma, her family gathered at the Council on Aging luncheon Friday, May 8, to celebrate her birthday.

Her actual birthday was earlier in the week, May 3. Not only was the family all there, they had made special cupcakes for everyone for dessert. There were pistachio or chocolate to choose from.

Cupcakes were served

after everyone had dined on stuffed cabbage, salad and hot garlic rolls.

Following lunch, Jake Russell from the Hilltown Community Development Center in Chesterfield announced the Online Ordering and Delivery with the Hilltown Markets. Shopping will begin Monday, June 1 with deliveries scheduled for Wednesday, June 3. There is a \$5 delivery fee. Products

available include fresh locally grown vegetables and fruits, frozen meats and specialized condiments.

The website for ordering is Hilltown Market, and the website is <https://hilltown-cdc.myshopify.com/>. For more information, people may call Russell at 413-296-4536 or email him at jaker@hilltowncdc.org

Next luncheon is Friday, May 22 at noon and diners will have vegetable

quiche with crispy “smashed potatoes,” maple sausage and dessert and drinks. There is no charge for the luncheons, but \$5 donation will help keep the program going.

Seniors should call 413-848-4279, extension 400 and leave name and number of people planning on attending. Game day is first Friday afternoon monthly at 2 p.m.

BILLS

cerned with “watershed preservation districts associated with Cobble Mountain and could assist with the limiting of the siting,” and Ferrera, who told SWSC representative Nicole Sanford that the town was working on an overlay map and bylaws.

Liability issue

The town will look into liability for an employee involved in an accident, who tests positive for drug or alcohol. Board member Ted Cousineau asked about this in light of the requirement for random testing for Commercial Driver's License holders.

Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee

Chair Jackie Cory brought the board up to date on the Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee activity. She said, “We are at the end of the intervenor process.”

She did say it was important for the town to be on record. An example of what Eversource would like to do is start work at 7 a.m. and go until 9 p.m. and she told them that would not work. Instead, she told them work 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. They want to work on

Saturdays as well.

Cory said the town would have a list of questions to ask and said that the Highway Department should track anything asked of them.

“There will be challenges for parking,” for example she said. A Gantt chart for the process appeared to Cory to have already been approved by the state, and she has questioned this with the attorney. She said that counsel had not done a lot of work on this process at this point.

To help cover costs associated with energy issues, the town is filing for a grant for repayment from the state and with different individuals filing each for \$150,000, “We could get up to a half a million dollars,” Cory said, with proof of spending.

There needs to be control of vendors – for solar – and Cousineau said he was looking to other towns to coordinate on a project manager for help.

250th celebration

Jennifer Girard then told the board there is a Veterans Memorial Bench, which will be in town in about six months. She then told the board about the ongoing plans for the prelude to the 250th celebration, Friday and

Memorial Day activities

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Memorial Day Parade Organizer Technical Sgt. Of the U.S. Air Force Douglas Emo announced that the annual Memorial Day parade will start promptly at 12 noon on Monday May 25.

This is a change from previous years when the parade began at 11:30 a.m..

All participants should form at the Blandford town offices no later than 11:30 a.m. The parade will start at the town offices and proceed to Main Street, turning right going up the hill to Veterans Park at Town Commons.

Civil Air Patrol youth group from Westover Base in Chicopee will be the color guard.

A service will follow. Woodford Way and John Berman will provide music. Chester/Blandford elementary students will read their poems and essays.

A town-wide picnic follows immediately following in Watson Park.

Call him at 413-561-3993 with any parade questions.

Recreation Committee

Chair Joann Martin said, “We need volunteers” to help with the Memorial Day picnic after the ceremony at Town Commons. There are several areas where people can help. Set up requires the most assistance. The process will start at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, May 26. Tables, games, decorating, setting up food tables, drink table, water/ice, picnic tables, tablecloths; helping to organize tag sale positions on Watson Park Road, everything to make the festivities happen. Games need to be set up throughout the field in several locations. There will be face painting and tattoos, all temporary, not permanent. Helpers will be needed for these activities.

People may call Martin at 413-455-9039. Her number and more information for volunteers will be on posters throughout the center of town.

Picnic fare includes dogs, burgers, sausage/onion/peppers, potato salad, pasta salad, tossed salad, desserts, chips and condiments.

“Mr. Whippy” Ice Cream Truck with Karen Maratea from West Springfield will serve ice cream starting at 1:30 p.m. following the picnic.

from page 1

Porter Memorial Library moves to temporary location

BLANDFORD – The Porter Memorial Library is moving, temporarily, but “here is what you need to know,” said library staffer Michele Crane.

The library will be closed from Monday, May 18 through Sunday, June 7. During this time the library will be moving to temporary home in the Town Hall.

Soon after the move, there will be activity at the library property as renovation and expansion begins.

While the library is closed, people should hold onto any books from Porter Memorial Library. These can be returned when the library re-opens on Monday, June 8. Books from other libraries can be returned to any CWMARS library like Westfield, Russell or Otis.

Director Nicole Daviau and the entire library staff appreciate patron patience and look forward to seeing everyone at the town hall.

Details on the Summer Reading program will be available soon. CommuniTea Reads is Saturday, May 16 at 11 a.m. The book is “Lost towns of the Swift River Valley: Drowned by the Quabbin” by Elena Palladino.

This non-fiction book fulfills the book club goal for May’s Mass Reading Challenge: a book that takes place in Massachusetts. It was published in 2022, recounting a dramatic piece of Massachusetts history. In 1938, 2,500 people lost their homes when four towns were flooded to make space for the Quabbin Reservoir.

WASHINGTON

Hilltown Hikers to hike Guilder Pond

MOUNT WASHINGTON – The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers holds a group hike on Saturday, May 30 at 10 a.m. to Guilder Pond Loop at Mount Everett State Forest.

The group takes the Guilder Pond Loop, rated easy going with ups and downs and tree roots. It is just over one mile around the pond.

There is the option after the pond loop to climb to the Mount Everett Lookout from the picnic area and for another mile and 650 feet of elevation gain. There are breathtaking views.

Participants may bring a kayak or paddle board for some optional paddling after the hike. They should bring lunch, as the group will stay all day. They will meet at the picnic area (Appalachian Trail sign) where the road ends.

Department of Conservation and Recreation interpretive coordinator Alec Gillman leads this

special hike. Guilder Pond in Mount Washington is the second highest Pond in Massachusetts with Mount Everett in the background.

Participants will experience nature at its finest here and amazing mountain laurel and azalea in spring. John Van Guilder, a Native American, lived in the Guilder Hollow area with Dutch settlers in the early 18th century. Van Guilder influenced his tribe to lease lands to the Dutch in 1740, after marrying the sister of a Dutch pioneer.

The VanGuilder Farm site dates back to the mid-1700s, when the Mahican Indians deeded the land to Jon Konkapot VanGuilder, the son of Chief Konkapot. The Mahicans settled the area in the late 1600s and welcomed the Dutch settlers.

The area surrounding Guilder Pond was subject to land disputes between Dutch and English settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Livingstons, a prominent Dutch family,

persisted in charging rent to English settlers, who had been granted free towns by the Massachusetts Colonial Legislature.

The Guilder Pond route begins near the Appalachian Trail parking area off Mount Everett Road in Mount Everett State Reservation. When the seasonal gate is open, hikers can drive directly to the trailhead. In the off-season, expect to hike a short distance up Mount Everett Road to reach the start of the loop. The trail circles Guilder Pond, staying close to the shoreline with mostly gentle terrain and minimal elevation change.

From the parking area, follow the Appalachian Trail north for a short stretch before turning left onto Guilder Pond Loop. Make your way around the pond for a little less than a mile and turn left onto Mount Everett Road to return to the parking area and complete the route.

The well-worn path leads through shaded woods,



This is a view of Guilder Pond, the location of the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers group hike on Saturday, May 30 at 10 a.m.

Submitted photo

across sections of exposed roots and rocks, and past stands of mountain laurel and azalea that bloom in early summer.

A rock outcropping on the eastern shore of the pond offers a scenic viewpoint and a place to rest or reflect. Though the route is short, the forest setting and steady water views give it a quiet, immersive feel.

Guilder Pond is a popular destination for day hikes in the Berkshires, and this

route is a good warm-up for those continuing toward Mount Everett.

People should register per vehicle by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. Maps and bottled water provided. Well behaved dogs welcome.

Event is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$15. People may call/text 413-302-0312 or email westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com if they have any questions.

As always be prepared for rocks, mud and roots, bring

trekking poles and a snack.

Those who want to hike every weekend year round may become a Hilltown Hiker member.

Follow Hilltown Hikers on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Tees, hoodies, hats, patches, water bottles and safety vests will be for sale by donation at the event.

People may see all their events, maps, blog and photos by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com.

FLORENCE

A cappella summer program takes center stage July 13-17

FLORENCE - For the first time in the Connecticut River Valley, young singers will have the chance to spend a week learning the art of a cappella harmony in a hands-on, science-meets-music summer program.

Heart of the Valley Chorus announces Young Singers in Harmony, a half-day vocal music program running July 13-17 at the Bombyx Center for Arts and Equity, 130 Pine St, Florence.

The program is open to youth entering grades 4-9 of

all genders and is designed for singers of all ability levels; no prior experience required.

Students entering grade 10 and up are invited to apply as teen interns, participating free of charge and earning letters of volunteer service.

The program has received grant support from Sweet Adelines International, the world's largest organization of women's a cappella singers, with chapters in over 25 countries. The grant, awarded through Sweet Adelines' Youth Outreach Event Funding pro-

gram, recognized the program's potential to introduce a new generation to the art of barbershop harmony.

"We want young singers to discover that their voice is an instrument," says Stephanie Flinker, director of Heart of the Valley Chorus and a retired elementary educator with over 25 years in the classroom. "This isn't just a singing program. It's about science and art and movement, and that joy that comes from music."

Each morning session blends vocal warm-ups,

musical games, theater exercises, and hands-on art and science projects – all built around the "science of sound." Participants will learn how vowels and harmonics shape what we hear, explore the history of barbershop music, and work toward performing a complete song together.

The week concludes with a public showcase on Friday afternoon, July 17, where Heart of the Valley Chorus and its quartets will also perform for families and the community.

Enrollment operates on a sliding fee scale of \$150-\$250, and no one will be turned away due to cost. Financial hardship accommodations are available directly through the director.

The program will also welcome guest performers from area a cappella groups throughout the week.

Registration opened February 2026 and closes July 1. Space is limited to 25 participants.

People may register online at www.bombyx.live

and Teen intern applications are available by visiting www.heartofthevalleychorus.org.

Heart of the Valley Chorus is an audition-based, all treble-voice a cappella choir and affiliate of Sweet Adelines International. The chorus has performed throughout the Connecticut River Valley for over 40 years, with members from Greenfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Easthampton, Hadley, South Hadley, Belchertown, Leeds, Florence, Northampton and Westhampton.

Florence Bank donates \$5,000 to YWCA

FLORENCE - The Florence Bank announce it donated \$5,000 to the Young Women's Christian Association of Western Massachusetts.

The YWCA has served the region for over 155 years and is the fifth largest YW association in the United States, providing support to nearly 12,000 individuals each year. Its guiding principle is to provide shelter, support services, and tools for women and girls in the community. The YW aims to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

The YW serves individu-

als and families through several sites including Holyoke, Northampton, Springfield and Westfield. Current programming includes workforce development, domestic violence/sexual abuse (DV/SA) counseling and advocacy, parent and youth support, human trafficking support, homelessness services, court advocacy, medical advocacy, supervised visitation, and a 24/7 DV/SA crisis hotline.

Florence Bank is committed to supporting initiatives that provide resources and programs for those facing barriers or challenging times, and its mission aligns with that of the YWCA. Supporting nonprofits that

drive positive change and empowering individuals and families are ways the Bank partners to build stronger and more resilient communities.

Florence Bank President and CEO Matt Garrity said the Bank is proud to support the YWCA. "As a community bank, our mission is to lend a hand where it's needed most. The YWCA provides women and children with access to critical support services in times of need and helps them find an avenue to a thriving future."

The YWCA's Springfield campus also provides shelter to survivors of domestic violence and their children in a modern facility with state-

of-the-art computerized security. It acts as a safe haven for people to heal, grow, and thrive.

The YWCA's expansive offerings are client-centered to reduce as many barriers as possible when working with survivors. Collaborative planning is used to outline the client's goals and preferences for YW to provide the necessary support and tools, while giving agency and empowering the client.

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton,



Florence Bank recently donated \$5,000 to the YWCA of Western Massachusetts. Submitted photo

Williamsburg, Amherst, Granby, Chicopee, West Hadley, Belchertown, Springfield and Springfield.

WESTFIELD

Westfield River Watershed Association hosts fish ladder open house

WESTFIELD - Hundreds of people are expected to gather along the Westfield River on Sunday, May 17 to watch the American Shad as they migrate upstream to spawn.

The Fish Ladder Open House is a free event sponsored each year by the Westfield River Watershed Association. This year's activities celebrate World Fish Migration Day, which recognizes the ecological, cultural, economic and recreational importance of fish migration.

Community members are welcome to stop by and check out the annual migration of this large native fish. From 9 a.m.-2 p.m. WRWA members offer short tours along the canal and dam at the former Southworth Paper Company on Front Street in

West Springfield.

"Come and witness this spectacular migration event!" exclaims Joseph Boulia, the newest member of the WRWA Board. "Our anadromous fish swim hundreds of miles through open ocean, the Connecticut River and into our very own watershed just to spawn at the very place they were born. This mass migration has been happening for thousands of years and plays an important part in our ecosystem health."

Boulia, a scientist with a specialty in native fish loves to share his excitement with the public. "It's a great way for all families to enjoy the beautiful Westfield River and all of the natural wonders that inhabit it."

"This is the most popular of all our activities each year. These big fish battle

the currents to get upstream all the way from Long Island Sound. It's fascinating to watch them from several places along the canal," said Mark Damon, president of the Westfield River Watershed Association (WRWA.) "Our on-site experts can explain and answer questions about the Connecticut River shad and their migration." The WRWA works in cooperation with A&D Hydro, Inc. and the Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to offer this one-day-a-year event to the public.

Besides the migrating fish, there's more to see while walking along the river path. "We always see water birds such as mallards, other ducks and great blue heron. Many different warblers are migrating north to their sum-

mer nesting sites. There are a couple of beaver dams on this section of the Westfield, and sometimes folks are lucky enough to catch the beaver working on their dam. There are even bald eagles who have been nesting along the Westfield River," adds Damon.

This free, family-friendly and teen-friendly activity is open to the public, rain or shine. The walk to the fish ladder is about ten minutes down an accessible dirt path.

Participants are encouraged to wear appropriate shoes and to dress for the weather; binoculars are helpful for bird-watching and seeing the wildlife up close. There is little shade along the open canal, so umbrellas, parasols and big hats are a good choice on warm, sunny days.

According to Caleb Slater of Mass. Fish & Wildlife, people can see the shad as they rest and gather strength at the bottom of the dam before they head up the fish ladder itself. "It's a powerful experience to watch them, knowing how far these fish have travelled from the ocean and where they still need to swim to spawn."

The American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), which are typically 20-24" long, can be found along the entire North Atlantic Coast from Labrador to Florida. Cleaner waters, fewer dams, and fish passageways such as the one in West Springfield are continuing to improve shad populations. Shad are anadromous, spending most of their lives at sea in salt water then returning to spawn in freshwater streams.

Those native to this area typically survive to spawn repeatedly for up to ten years. This annual fish run has been an integral food source for the Connecticut River Valley since the native people, and later colonists, began fishing and drying them. Local fishermen today continue catching shad during the year-round open season.

For more information about the Westfield River Watershed Association and its activities, people may visit www.westfieldriver.org. The Westfield River Watershed Association was established in 1953 to protect and improve the natural resources of the watershed, as well as to expand recreational and other land use opportunities for people's enjoyment and for sound ecology.

Sen. John Velis returns from deployment

WESTFIELD - The Office of State Senator Velis announces state Senator John C. Velis returned home following a six-month long deployment with the Massachusetts National Guard.

"It's an incredible feeling to be back with my family and our community. I'm eager to get back to work ahead of the Senate's budget debates later this month to secure vital funding for our district and to fight for the issues at the top of mind of so many residents," said Senator Velis. "I am grateful to my entire Senate

team, who has gone above and beyond over the past few months serving our district and ensuring that I was kept up to date on all matters locally and up on Beacon Hill."

Velis announced back in late October that he would soon be placed on an active-duty deployment with his Guard unit of assignment to the Southwestern border of the United States. During the Senator's activation, his office remained fully operational and continued to assist with constituent inquiries and Senate matters.

EASTHAMPTON

Lauren Tabin receives bankESB promotion

EASTHAMPTON, - bankESB announces the promotion of Lauren Tabin to vice president, branch officer, of its 297 King St., Northampton office.

In her expanded role, Tabin will continue to lead branch operations while playing a key role in advancing retail strategy, supporting team development, and enhancing the customer experience. She will contribute to driving consistent performance and strengthening the bank's

presence within the communities it serves.

Tabin of Holyoke, joined bankESB in 2024 as assistant vice president, branch officer, bringing nearly 30 years of retail banking experience. Prior to joining the bank, she served as assistant vice president, consumer and business banking manager at



Lauren Tabin

PeoplesBank.

During her tenure at bankESB, she has successfully managed both the 170 Sargeant St., Holyoke office and the King Street Northampton office, fostering strong teams and delivering high-quality service.

Highly engaged in the community, Tabin serves on

the board of directors for the Northampton Rotary Club and Realistic Lemonade Inc.

She is treasurer of Trees of Love, Friends of Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and an active volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County, Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts, The Sphere Northampton, and the Golf FORE Health Tournament. Tabin is also a Business West 40 Under Forty honoree (Class of 2011).

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GOSHEN

Williams Boltwood house is last of its kind in the USA

GOSHEN – A rare historical property in Goshen, has been under intensive study recently by multiple prestigious historians from throughout the northeast.

They are now suggesting that the Williams-Boltwood property at 2 Williams Drive is the last of its kind in the USA. The structure is a multi-purpose complex that includes a residence, tavern room, general store, tiny post office, four room inn, and stepping stones from its days as a stage coach stop.

While multi-purpose buildings such as this were common in the colonial and federalist periods, not many still survive today.

Those that do have often been altered, relocated or repurposed. Goshen's six purpose building remains intact, with no significant changes since before the Civil War. To date, investigation hasn't found any other property in the United States that matches this history.

The site is quickly gaining regional recognition since recognized last year as one of Massachusetts's 10 most endangered historic resources. Multiple historians and preservationists have visited the property.

"It makes us look at this place with a whole new perspective when we catch the interest of historians who have worked with big name places like the Emily Dickinson Museum, Historic Deerfield, Pequot Museum, Shaker Village, even the Smithsonian," says Kam Osborne, project co-director for the Williams-Boltwood House Trust, Inc (WBHT) who owns the building.

"We had no idea how significant the house was when we first started the restoration project four years ago. We began to figure it out after historians kept asking if they could invite their colleagues to come visit. It's been humbling to hear again



Visiting timber framer examines hoist wheel in attic.

Photos by Kam Obourne

and again how unbelievably rare this place is."

Project co-director Melanie Lamere, adds, "I've lived in Goshen all my life. It's wild to think about how Goshen has something this special in our little town. We had to keep quiet about it for years because the building was full of 200 years of family treasures. It was a security nightmare. Now that we've moved the artifacts safely off-site we are trying to get the word out and let Goshen know just what an incredible treasure they have."

Over the last three years the property has been undergoing intense investigation. Thanks to the residents of Goshen approving a \$108,000 CPA grant in 2022, the historical features of the building have been exhaustively researched and a complete structural engineering evaluation completed.

The Williams-Boltwood

House Trust, Inc is now working on a feasibility study funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council with support from the UMass Isenberg School of Management.

This study is evaluating creative ways to use the property to address the economic and cultural needs of Goshen. In keeping with the site's rich history, future plans will incorporate modern versions of the building's historical purposes as a store, community gathering place, school, stopping point for travelers, business center and social hub.

The MBA team from the UMass Isenberg School of Management spent the last three months completing a detailed marketing analysis of the Goshen center area, with final results to be available later this month.

This in-depth information will be invaluable not only to the WBHT project,



Members of Venaclar Architecture Forum tour the Williams-Boltwood House



Co-director Kam Obourne, right, discusses funding options with Sen. Paul Mark.

but also will be shared with the Goshen Select Board for incorporation into their future planning. The MBA team's task included identifying potential cultural and business uses for the Williams-Boltwood site that will enable the site to be self-supporting and enhance the local economy.

Architect Jeff Penn (who designed the Highland Ambulance facility) is assisting with the physical portion of the feasibility investigation. This component will compile data from structural engineering, wetlands evaluation, and prior historical assessments to determine best uses of the on-site struc-

tures in ways that protect their historical integrity.

WBHT is a 501(c)(3) organization and is 100% volunteer run. Anyone interested in participating in the Williams-Boltwood Project may visit their website at www.williamsboltwood.com. Community ideas and input are always appreciated.

HOUSATONIC

Berkshire Pulse announces summer program schedule

HOUSATONIC – Berkshire Pulse, South County's dynamic dance and creative arts center, unveils its summer 2026 schedule of dance, music and creative arts classes for area youth, teens and adults.

Berkshire Pulse provides opportunities for dancers of all ages and experience levels to learn, grow and be inspired. People may visit <https://berkshirepulse.org/summer-intensive-programs/> for the complete schedule.

Dance Discovery for ages 8-13 takes place Monday, July 6 to Friday, July 10 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and half day option for ages 8-9 from 9 a.m.-noon. This week-long program provides

an introduction to dance forms including ballet, modern, African and more.

Dance Adventure for ages 4-7 is July 13 to July 17 from 9 a.m.-noon. This program for the youngest dancers invites them on an expedition into the exciting, engaging, and rewarding world of dance. Classes will include creative dance, storytelling, drumming and more.

Hip Hop and Street Style is for ages 10-adult, all levels July 20 to 24 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. In this week-long program, dancers will learn foundational movements and techniques of hip-hop and street style dance, alongside discussions about the cultural meaning and significance of

these dance forms.

Musical Theater is for ages 10 plus July 27 to Aug. 1 (six days), all levels from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

This week-long program gives students the opportunity to jump right into the world of musical theater with classes in Broadway jazz, voice, acting and improvisation.

Young Dancers and Choreographers Intensive for ages 11 plus is Aug. 3 to Aug. 7 and Aug. 10 to Aug. 14 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. This intensive is for dancers with at least two years of dance experience.

This two week-long program will focus on interdisciplinary dance technique,

including classes in ballet, modern, Simonson Jazz, African, Salsa and Flamenco. The second will focus on contemporary forms, dance-making, dance filmmaking, improvisation and partnering.

Pre-Registration opened in February, people can pre-register by calling 413-274-6624 or visiting their website at berkshirepulse.org.

Pulse is committed to making their programs affordable and accessible to all. New, prospective and returning students and their families should be aware of the following Access offerings to support their ongoing participation:

Partial or full tuition waivers are available to any student with demonstrated financial need, 100% automatic waivers for EBT/WIC recipients. They should visit the TA page on the website to learn more and apply.

Pulse maintains an inventory of clean, dress-code appropriate dance wear for youth students to borrow, whenever needed. Pulse maintains an inventory of gently-used tap, character, jazz, and flamenco shoes in youth and adult sizes for borrowing, whenever needed.

Enrollment and tuition assistance applications are available both in English and Spanish. There are several ADA parking spaces avail-

able at the front and side of the building, plus an elevator to the studios on the third floor for anyone with mobility issues.

Berkshire Pulse is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 by Artistic Director Bettina Montano dedicated to building and strengthening community life through diverse and accessible programming in performing, movement, and creative arts. By promoting participation in these educational and health-sustaining activities, they enrich the lives of families and individuals of all ages throughout the region. For more information, people may visit <http://berkshirepulse.org/>.

PITTSFIELD

Berkshire Art Association holds juried show

PITTSFIELD – The Berkshire Art Association invites artists from the New England states and New York to showcase their original art in all media for a biennial juried exhibition, Tune In.

All artwork must have been made within the past two years. The call is open, and closes Sunday, June 29.

Artists may visit <https://tunein2026baabiennial.artcall.org> to submit their work. Tune In is open to all emerging or established artists working in the Northeast United States,

New England and New York. All visual media will be considered for submission including but not limited to painting, photography, sculpture, fine craft, installations, printmaking, mixed media, ceramics and metals.

Jurors will evaluate submissions, select artwork for inclusion and determine award winners.

A Juror Award will be selected by each of the jurors from the juried submissions.

Jurors are: Michael Boroniec, artist, design-

er and sculptor; Arthur Hillman, Professor Emeritus of Photography, Simon's Rock College at Bard and Mindy Hackner, Artist, early childhood educator, museum educator

Artists may submit up to three works created between 2024 and 2026 for an entry fee of \$25 in total. Thanks to a generous grant from Pittsfield Cultural Council, the BAA is able to reduce the entry fee. People may email admin@berkshireartassociation.org for more information. The deadline for submissions

is Sunday, June 28. Artists will be notified by Tuesday, July 14.

Tune In will run from Friday, September 4 through Friday, Sept. 25 at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts in Pittsfield. Art should be delivered to the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts by Friday, Aug. 28.

All selected work must be exhibition ready. All 2D work must be ready to hang. Installations and 3D works should be accompanied by detailed instructions on how the work will be installed.

New driver schedule at BRTA

PITTSFIELD – Berkshire Regional Transit Authority announced its new driver schedule will be in operation as of Monday, May 11, putting an end to months of route cancellations and assuring more reliable service for riders.

Kathleen Lambert, administrator for BRTA, said developing the new schedule was a milestone and the process was a cooperative effort among Teamsters Local Union 404 drivers; Transdev and Keolis, public transportation management and the BRTA administration.

Lambert offered thanks

to the partners, who made the effort possible and added, "BRTA would also like to thank our loyal riders who have suffered through some tough times. Thanks for sticking with us."

Lambert said service improvements are also coming in the form of new Intelligent Transportation System software, which will offer customers tools to understand if a service interruption has occurred and help answer questions like, "Where is my bus?"

For more information, people may visit berkshirerta.gov.

OBITUARIES

Christopher Mann



It is with deep sadness that we share the loss of Christopher Matthew Mann, who passed away on May 3, 2026, surrounded by his loving family.

Christopher was born in Westfield, moved to Baldwinsville, New York and later lived the remainder of his adult life in Montgomery.

He was a devoted husband, loving father and cherished friend whose warmth, humor and generous spirit left a lasting impression on all who knew him. He had a way of lighting up any room – quick with a joke, a story, or a familiar smile that put others at ease.

Friendly and kind by nature, he could talk to anyone about anything. He took a genuine interest in people, remembering names, faces and the stories that made each person unique. People mattered deeply to him and he often told stories about friends from every chapter of his life, always recalling them by name.

A proud Vietnam Era veteran who served in the United States Navy, Christopher

lived a life rooted in service and integrity. He was a lifelong teacher in the Westfield Public Schools, where he taught industrial arts and United States history. He completed his undergraduate degree at the State University of New York at Oswego and earned his master's degree in education at Westfield State University, sharing his knowledge, patience and encouragement with generations of students.

He was also a dedicated coach of youth sports, particularly soccer, known for his kind, strategic and energetic approach. He brought out the best in those he coached, offering guidance that was both gentle and firm, and serving as a trusted mentor to many young people.

Gifted with his hands, he was known for his ability to build, repair and create. He took pride in renovating and caring for his home and was



often the person family and friends turned to when something needed fixing.

In his later years, he became an entrepreneur alongside his wife, Sandra, co-founding Sandmann Gifts, a crafting business where he created woodworking pieces and handmade items with care and skill. Beyond craftsmanship, he was also a builder of relationships, bringing people together and offering steady, generous support.

He enjoyed gardening, cooking and spending time outdoors hunting and fishing. He especially valued sharing a good meal and a drink with friends. An avid hunter, he loved time spent in the field with his Springer Spaniels and was a proud member of the Western Massachusetts Bird Dog Club, where he helped build the organization's primary clubhouse.

He was the beloved son of the late Dorothy Hansen Mann

and Joseph Matthew Mann and maintained close bonds with his siblings and extended family throughout his life. He was also the proud godfather to David Capucilli.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 52 years, Sandra Carroll Mann; his son, Benjamin Mann and his wife, Elaine Pescik Mann and their children, Colton Mann and Kathryn Mann and his daughter, Hilary Blair and her husband, Dafthi Blair, and their daughters, Mathilde Blair and Una Blair. He is also survived by his siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and many dear friends, all of whom will miss him greatly.

Calling hours will be held at Firtion-Adams Funeral Home, 76 Broad St., Westfield, Massachusetts on Friday, May 8, from 4-7 p.m. A funeral service will be held at Holy Family Parish, 5 Main St., Russell, Massachusetts on Saturday, May 9 at 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that donations be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

DEATH NOTICES

MANN, CHRISTOPHER MATTHEW

Died May 3, 2026

MARSH, CHRISTINE (TINKER)

Died April 30, 2026

Celebration of life will be held at a later date

Christine (Tinker) Marsh

Christine (Tinker) Marsh, 75, of West Dover, VT was born in Westfield on August 5, 1950. She passed away April 30, 2026 at Albany Medical Center.

She was the daughter of Zack and Crystal (Hall) Donovan and lived on Old Post Road in Worthington. She attended Russell H. Conwell School and graduated from Gateway Regional High School in 1968.

She worked at Clark School for the deaf for two years, Peter Pan Bus Co. and worked several years at Worthington Assembly. She attended Airline School.

She married Robert Marsh August 6, 1986 and moved to West Dover, VT.

Christine leaves behind her husband of 40 years

Robert Marsh. Two sons, Benjamin LeBeau and Adam LeBeau and his wife Miranda; two grandsons, Timothy LeBeau and Austin LeBeau; two great grandchildren, Lillana and Liam; a sister, Brenda Mason and husband Larry Mason; a brother, Gregory and sister-in-law Joan Donovan. And many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents and siblings Winston Donovan, Steven Donovan, Kerry (Cork) Donovan and wife Ginger, and sister Cynthia Crabral Howes.

She loved crossword puzzles and playing her guitar for family and friends.

A celebration of life will be held in Vermont at a later date.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

GATEWAY

from page 1

of meeting the competency determination requirements for graduation, evidence of meeting the requirements for the "Habits of a Scholar," goals for their life after graduation, action steps for reaching these goals and requests for coursework in grades eleven and twelve to prepare to meet their goals after high school.

Instead of passing a state-wide test, students show their work as it connects to the state standards, as evidence of meeting the competency determination requirements for graduation. As an example, Sullivan said students who were assigned to read the book "Night" had to write an essay using evidence from the text. This essay could be presented as meeting the "citing textual evidence" standard during their presentation.

Students were able to work on these presentations during their Nurturing Engaging Supporting and Teaching period in their freshmen and sophomore years. Preparation also took place during some classes.

Students were scored by the panel on a scale of 0 – 4 for each of the six requirements. The combined score needs to be at least 20 to complete this requirement for graduation. Students, who don't reach that score can continue to demonstrate their learning at the end of each quarter for the rest of their time at Gateway until they reach a passing score.

Sullivan said that the Class of 2028 was the first grade to present their demonstrations of learning and that they were wonderful. Each averaged about 20 minutes. Many parents attended and interest was very high across the school, leading other teachers to come and observe.

"We already knew a lot about the kids but we learned a lot more about what they are hoping for," Sullivan explained. This helps students plan and focus their learning over the next two years.

One student wants a career as an elementary

teacher, but not in early childhood so Gateway's EEC vocational program is not a fit for them. The school can, however, arrange an internship at Littleville Elementary School next door. Another student wants to become a state police officer and Gateway has a strong relationship with the Russell Barracks, Sullivan said.

They will be able to arrange someone to come in and mentor that student over time. A third student is passionate about veterinary science and the school will arrange dual enrollment with Vet Tech classes at Holyoke Community College to give them a head start.

These new initiatives were designed specifically at and for Gateway and inspired by the site visits to high schools across the country that were taken by teachers, staff, parents, students and administrators using grant funding from the Barr Foundation.

Sullivan makes it clear that it is uniquely Gateway's, however and is still under development. "Initially it was going to be a singular point in time and then we realized that was no better than MCAS," Sullivan said. The demonstration of learning includes a proposal for the rest of high school. As juniors, they will reflect on their first year of heading toward their educational and career goals. In 12th grade, they will present a "Senior Signature," a final portfolio/demonstration of learning.

The Class of 2028 is the first one to go through this system, which Sullivan said could be adjusted over time. They may, for example, expand it to start with 9th grade. The Class of 2029 will be expected to show mastery of each skill outlined in the Portrait of a Gator (also known as habits of a scholar) each year.

As defined, Gateway Gators are leaders, service-minded, technologically skilled, communicators, collaborative, perseverant, knowledgeable, engaged, resourceful and

self-directed. Tracking the expectations for each skill will be done by the students and their NEST teachers.

NEST is another new initiative for students in grades 8 – 12, designed to build a sense of community throughout the school. It occurs five days a week.

On three of those days, students select an activity such as extra help, sports talk, cricket club, or chess club. Students can also use that time to work on their extended studies; once completed, extended course work grants honors credit on a student transcript.

The other two days they are with their "home nests." The same group of students in each home nest will be led by the same two teachers over all five years. Led by Assistant Principal Val Zeh, a NEST committee comes up with lesson plans for the home NESTS that might include competitions between NESTs, community building events, and grade checks.

Another new initiative is a capstone project as an alternative to taking English IV. Credit for a capstone is granted to students completing independent projects throughout their senior year. Sullivan said that one student literally wrote a novel as their capstone project.

Gateway teacher Cheryl Wright has been part of this transformation. "We have a lot of new projects going and it's really exciting," she said. "It gets the kids more invested in their learning. I hope that they are seeing the relevance of what they're doing in their future lives."

Wright further added, "When we're trying to get kids to achieve, the first thing is to get them to believe they can do it. Second is to see the value of doing it. And then we need to show them that we care that they do it."

Next year, Barr will fund an instructional leadership team working on the classroom and further refining the demonstration of learning.

Nine inducted into Gateway NHS

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Nine juniors at Gateway Regional School were inducted into the Dana O. Webber Chapter of the National Honor Society on Wednesday, May 6, in a 6 p.m. ceremony in the Gateway Performing Arts Center.

Students are selected for having an excellent record of leadership, scholarship, service and character. Junior inductees are Elle DeMoss, Addison Green, Charlotte Hansen, Cameron Hepburn, Dylan Hepburn, Caitlin McKellick, Anya Niles, Levi Savoy and Amelia Steward-Frey.

After a ceremony led by senior NHS members, the juniors recited the National Honor Society Pledge: "I pledge myself to uphold the

high purposes of the National Honor Society to which I have been selected, striving in every way by word and deed to make its ideals the ideals of my school and my life."

Members are required to complete individual community service projects. This year's seniors volunteered with the elderly, in local libraries, at community events and fundraisers, at churches, at the Westfield River Wildwater Races, at Baystate Noble Hospital, the Whip City Animal Sanctuary, Westfield State College for Kids and coaching youth sports.

A number of seniors helped at this year's Trivia Night Fundraiser to benefit the Gateway Education Foundation.

NHS members also manage annual chapter proj-

ects, including the Hilltown Family Center's Holiday Help drive, reading to elementary students on Dr. Seuss Day and working as servers and greeters at the district's annual Senior Citizen Breakfast and Concert.

Gateway's NHS Advisor is Mrs. Alexandra Jennings. Current officers are President Desmond St. Martin, Vice-President Kathryn Harding, Secretary Ashley Tacke and Treasurer Jake Marchbanks. Other senior members of the chapter are Jeffrey Antonellis, Theodore Deangelis-Page, Ana Holmes, Eliza Mueller, Elizabeth Kadzik, Lily Peloquin, Grace Renauld, Justin Rucki and Michael Whitaker.

This was the sixty second induction ceremony at the school.

Penelope Villada of Westhampton graduates from University of Georgia

ATHENS, GA – Penelope Maya Villada of Westhampton is one of over 9,400 candidates to graduate from the University of Georgia's Class of 2026 spring Commencement.

She receives a Bachelor of Business Administration

in finance.

"We are excited to recognize the achievements of our University of Georgia students in the Class of 2026," said President Jere W. Morehead. "Commencement represents a chance to celebrate outstanding accom-

plishments and honor the families and friends who supported these students on their journeys. We look forward to seeing the many ways these graduates will continue to represent the University of Georgia as proud alumni."

Junior Achievement honors Class of 2026

SPRINGFIELD – Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts will honor its 18 Under 18 Class of 2026 at a special celebration presented by Teddy Bear Pools and Spas.

The awards dinner will take place at 5 p.m. on Monday, May 18 at 5 p.m. in Storrowton Carriage House and will spotlight 18 outstanding young people from throughout Western Massachusetts, who exemplify innovative spirit, leadership and community involvement.

"We are proud to celebrate this year's honorees and the example they set for their peers and their communities," said Amie Miarecki, president, JAWM. "Their accomplishments reflect talent, drive and a strong commitment to making a difference."

The following students comprise JA's 18 Under 18 Class of 2026: Miracle Chambers, Roger L. Putnam Vocational-Technical Academy; Kyleigh Dorman, Holyoke High School; Brayden Federico, Agawam High School; Alia Ghaoui,

Williston Northampton School; Graham Howard, Longmeadow High School; Khloe Jacobs, Springfield International Charter School; London Lester, Central High School;

Fynn Maldonado, Holyoke High School; Xzavier M Nilani Mathur, Longmeadow High School; Mykella Meadows, Central High School; Adrien Pazmandy, Frontier Regional High School

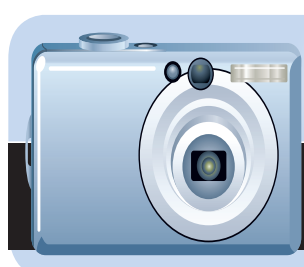
Rachel Roblinski, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School; Addison Rodriguez, Holyoke High School; Arianna Turner, Central High School; Toni Vassallo, Agawam High School and Miya Wranovix, Longmeadow High School.

JAWM thanks Teddy Bear Pools and Spas, Holyoke Community College, the Men of Color Health Awareness, The UPS Store and The Realistic CEO Magazine for supporting JA's 18 Under 18 Class of 2026.

Tickets to the event are on the Junior Achievement

of Western Massachusetts at westernmass.ja.org.

Junior Achievement Worldwide is the world's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future and make smart academic and economic choices. JA learning experiences are delivered by educators and community volunteers and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students ages 5 through 25 knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. JA was founded in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1919, making Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts the organization's first chapter. Today, it serves thousands of young people in Western Massachusetts and parts of Worcester County and Vermont, who participate in JAWM learning experiences annually. For more information, people may visit jawm.org.



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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Probate and Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
(413)586-8500
Docket No. HS26P0293EA
Estate of:
William Howard Leland
Also known as:
William H. Leland
Date of Death: 11/17/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
 A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Wendy Sauvageot of Laurel, MD and Karen St. Onge of East Hartford, CT requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition. The Petitioner requests that Wendy Sauvageot of Laurel, MD and Karen St. Onge of East Hartford, CT be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsuper-

vised administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
 You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 06/03/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
 A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the

Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Diana S. Velez Harris**, First Justice of this Court.
 Date: May 06, 2026
Mark S. Ames,
 Register of Probate
 05/14/2026

Town of Worthington Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing
 In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, the Worthington Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing in response to a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) regarding proposed work associated with two culverts on Lindsey Hill Road:
 214-398: collapsed 18-inch culvert
 115-299: partially collapsed and perched 24-inch culvert
 The Hearing will be held **Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 7:00 PM** in the Selectboard meeting room at Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road.
 05/14/2026

TOWN OF RUSSELL CONSERVATION COMMISSION RUSSELL MASSACHUSETTS
 Pursuant to MGL Chap. 131 §40, its Regulations at 310 CMR 10.00, the Russell Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on a **Request for Determination of Applicability** filed by the Town of Russell DPW for the Blandford Stage Road Improvements Project. A portion of the project is located within Buffer Zone to Inland Bank. The meeting will be held on **Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:00PM** at the Town Hall Building, 65 Main Street, Russell, Massachusetts. The filing is available for review between the hours of 8:30AM and 4:00 PM and the Conservation Commission can be reached at 413-230-9130.
BY THE ORDER OF THE RUSSELL CONSERVATION COMMISSION
 05/14/2026

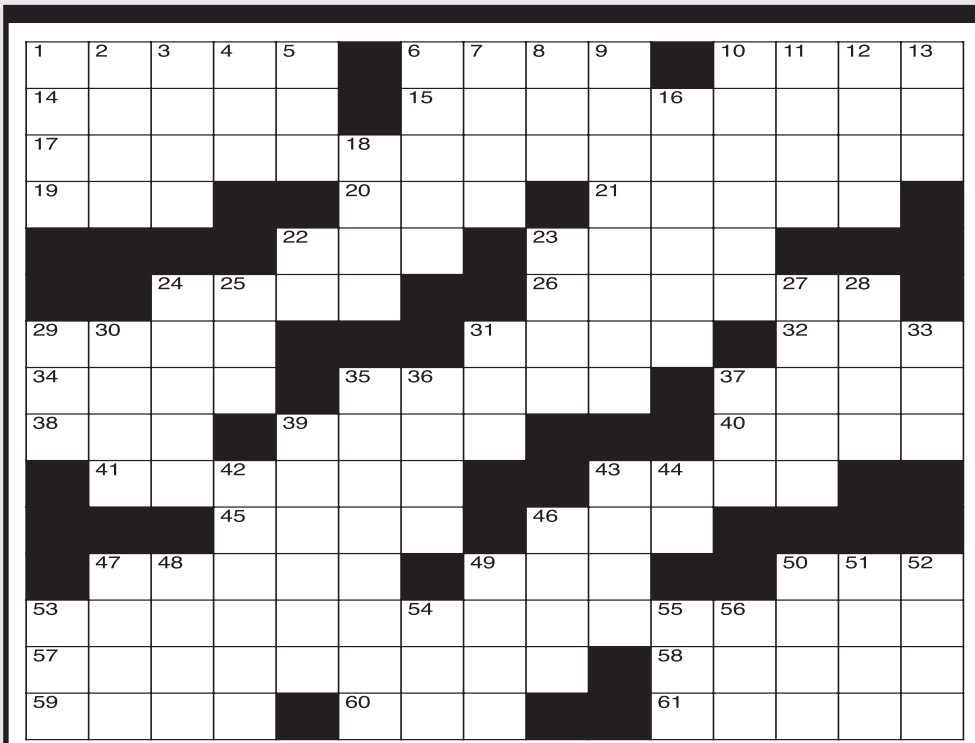
TOWN OF BLANDFORD PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE - MGL c.40A, §5
 In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter

40A, Section 5, the Blandford Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008 at **6:00 PM on May 29, 2026** to consider amendments to the Town's Zoning Map and its Zoning By-law concerning the placement and regulation of Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) installations. The proposed amendments include adoption of an overlay zoning district to limit the siting of such installations and substantial revisions to Section VIII - Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and Section XVI - Battery En-

ergy Storage Systems of the existing Zoning By-law. A copy of the proposed overlay energy district map and amendments is on file and available for inspection at the Blandford Post Office and Town Hall, and at <https://TownofBlandford.gov/planning>. Any person interested or wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated. If unable to attend please submit comments, in writing, to the Blandford Planning Board at 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008.
 Greg Garfield, Chair
 Blandford Planning Board
 05/14, 05/21/2026

EARLY DEADLINES

In observance of Memorial Day, **PUBLIC NOTICES EARLY AD DEADLINE**
 Place your public notice no later than **NOON**
Thursday, May 21
 - Thank you!

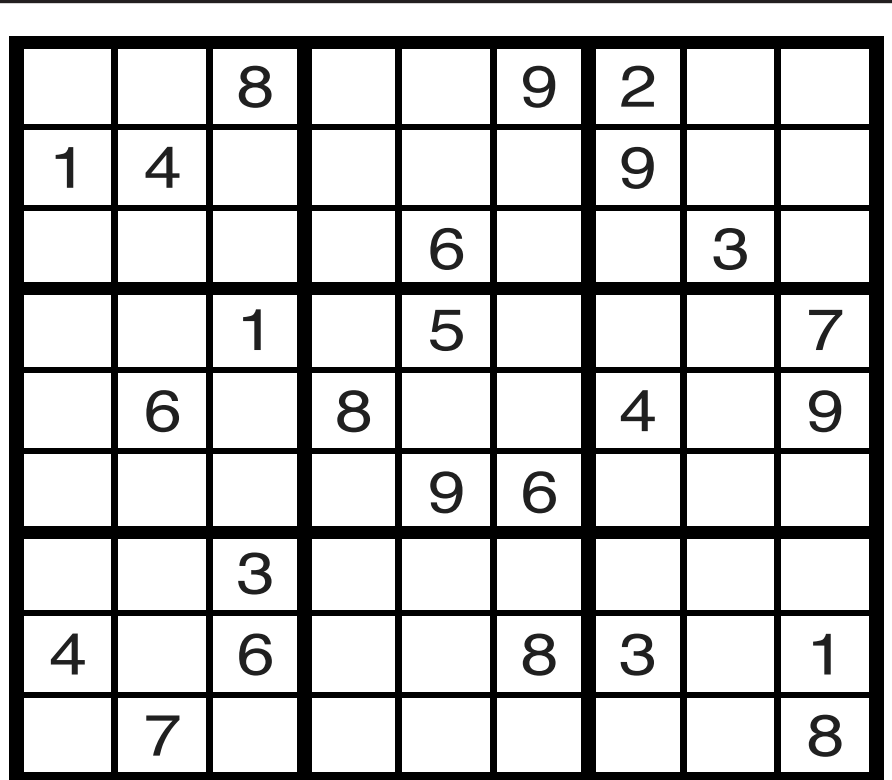


CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Notable casino destination
- 6. Current units
- 10. Roman military unit
- 14. American lizard
- 15. Fates
- 17. The Yankees have lots of these
- 19. Unhappy
- 20. Mimic
- 21. Remove from the record
- 22. Where cargo ships dock (abbr.)
- 23. A way to fight
- 24. Turfs
- 26. Contract
- 29. Country along the Arabian peninsula
- 31. Tree species
- 32. Pituitary gland secretion (abbr.)
- 34. Perfect
- 35. "Partner" to groans
- 37. Jewish calendar
- month
- 38. Where wrestlers work
- 39. Egotistical
- 40. Potted plants
- 41. Containers
- 43. Large, flightless birds
- 45. Part of a book
- 46. American spies
- 47. Pancakes made of buckwheat flour
- 49. Swiss river
- 50. Disfigure
- 53. Have surgery
- 57. Formal withdrawal
- 58. Early English council
- 59. Area units
- 60. 2,000 lbs.
- 61. Siskel and ___
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Animal jaws
- 2. Small water buffalo
- 3. An appliance has
- one
- 4. Every
- 5. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
- 6. Very skilled
- 7. No more than what is specified
- 8. Tire measurement
- 9. Towers
- 10. Forward
- 11. Jacob ___, American journalist
- 12. Vale
- 13. Former CIA
- 16. Middle Eastern nation
- 18. Exhausts
- 22. South Dakota
- 23. The complete duration of something
- 24. Kids love him
- 25. Singular
- 27. Cod genus
- 28. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
- 29. Resistance unit
- 30. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 31. Cast out
- 33. 60-minute periods
- 35. Most worn
- 36. European river
- 37. Atomic mass unit
- 39. Items of food
- 42. Body parts
- 43. Ireland
- 44. Partner to Pa
- 46. Sammy ___, songwriter
- 47. Dutch settler
- 48. Full-grown pike fish
- 49. Sun or solar disk
- 50. Minute arachnid
- 51. From a distance
- 52. A monthly expense
- 53. Young women's association
- 54. Brazilian state
- 55. Air freight provider
- 56. Pointed end of a pen

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

- ARIES**
 Mar 21/Apr 20
 Aries, a professional door you thought was locked is actually just heavy. Push a little harder. Your honesty is exactly what a stalled project needs to move forward.
- CANCER**
 Jun 22/Jul 22
 Don't ignore your dreams. Your subconscious is trying to solve a puzzle while you sleep. Keep a notepad by the bed; a "Eureka!" moment arrives soon.
- LIBRA**
 Sept 23/Oct 23
 Romance is leaning toward the intellectual this week, Libra. A deep conversation about your values or goals will bring you closer to a partner or a new interest.
- CAPRICORN**
 Dec 22/Jan 20
 Patience is your mantra. You're waiting for an answer, and while the silence is frustrating, the result will be worth it. Use the downtime to refine your strategy.
- TAURUS**
 Apr 21/May 21
 Financial clarity is coming your way, Taurus. You might discover a subscription you don't need or a better way to save for that big-ticket item. Your future self will thank you.
- LEO**
 Jul 23/Aug 23
 You're the glue holding your team together this week, Leo. While you're busy leading, don't forget to delegate. You'll find that people are more than willing to help if you seek assistance.
- SCORPIO**
 Oct 24/Nov 22
 Scorpio, whether it's your home life or a long-term project, pay attention to the small details and you will prevent a headache later. A family member offers some sage advice.
- AQUARIUS**
 Jan 21/Feb 18
 You are a magnet for eccentric people this week, Aquarius. Embrace the weirdness. A chance encounter with someone outside your usual circle sparks a very profitable idea.
- GEMINI**
 May 22/Jun 21
 Your words have extra weight this week, Gemini. Use them to bridge a gap between friends or to draft that important email. A sibling or close neighbor has some surprising news for you.
- VIRGO**
 Aug 24/Sept 22
 A change in your daily routine brings a massive boost to your mood, Virgo. Try a morning workout or a different lunch spot. Breaking the cycle opens the door for a fresh perspective.
- SAGITTARIUS**
 Nov 23/Dec 21
 Your curiosity is your best asset this week, Sagittarius. Take a deep dive into a topic that usually bores you—you'll find a hidden connection that benefits your career.
- PISCES**
 Feb 19/Mar 20
 Quiet reflection is more productive than busy work. Slip away for some solitude. You'll soon have the clarity you need to make a big decision about your living situation.



SUDOKU

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

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

answers

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

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

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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



This interpretive sign is the first sign at the Chester Granite Saw in Chester and was installed April 2026.



Liz Massa stand by the Chester granite saw.

Submitted photos

Hilltown Hikers continue renovating granite saw site

A monumental April day at the Chester Granite Saw in Chester as co-founders Karen and Liz installed the first of a future many more weatherproof interpretive signs along the footpath.

The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers have been historically renovating the entire three acre parcel which contains the 1870 Chester Granite Works property, which includes its building remains and the twelve foot diameter saw blade.

Volunteers have worked all by hand with wheelbarrows and no mechanical equipment uncovering history for the past two and a half years. The goal is to bring this property back to how it was in 1947 going by the

only original blueprint we have for the mill.

Thanks to a grant from the Chester Cultural Council in 2025 the interpretive trail now contains a beautiful two foot by four foot weatherproof sign, which details the Granite Industry in Western Massachusetts including it's origins of granite being discovered in Becket in 1870 by the York brothers from Maine.

This first sign overlooks the massive piles of granite blocks which were brought here on the Chester and Becket Railroad for cutting and finishing from the Hudson and Chester Granite Quarry in Becket, today known as the Becket Quarry. The property is open to the public year round and contains many artifacts including

machinery.

The entire parcel was covered in eight to twelve inches of dirt, debris and trees for eighty years. Three phases of dead ash tree cutting has already taken place since September of 2023, when we first purchased this mill property, a footpath trail has been created making for easy access to visit and see all the relics.

The next goal will be to fundraise enough money to build a pole barn to protect the saw structure and machinery from the weather. Donations are welcome by visiting the website www.hilltownhikers.com or by [venmo @hilltownhikers](https://www.paycommercing.com). Thank you to all for supporting the Hilltown Hikers preservation efforts to keep Hilltown History alive.



The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers Board of Directors hold the interpretive sign before installing it by the granite saw.



Here is another view of the giant granite saw with a pavillion protecting it from the weather.



Here is photo of the Cheter Granite Saw employees standing amid blocks of granite brought from the Hudson and Chester Granite Quarry in Becket.

LEE

Lee Library hosts Jacob's Pillow exhibit and programs

LEE – The Lee Library, 100 Main St., hosts Jacob's Pillow exhibit from Monday, June 1 to Tuesday, June 30 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. in Scolforo Gallery.

The exhibit traces the long and often overlooked relationship between the internationally renowned dance hub Jacob's Pillow

and the neighboring town of Lee from the early 1930s to today.

An opening reception takes place on Tuesday, June 2 from 4-5:45 p.m. in the Scolforo Gallery at the Lee Library, 100 Main St. Pamela Tatge, executive and artistic director of Jacob's Pillow will provide welcoming

remarks.

History of Lee seniors dancing at Jacob's Pillow takes place on Thursday, June 11 from 11 a.m.-noon. Sponsored by the Lee Council on Aging, this program takes place at Lee Council on Aging, 21 Crossway S. Researcher Joshua D. Bloom will present

the history of Lee senior citizens performing at Jacob's Pillow from 1985-1993; lunch follows.

"Secret" Gay History of Jacob's Pillow with Norton Owen, Historian and Founding Director of Preservation for Jacob's Pillow, takes place Thursday, June 11 from 4:30-5:45 p.m.

He will explore how gay history is intertwined with Jacob's Pillow's very beginnings, often hiding in plain sight.

Marketing, tourism and business relations between Jacob's Pillow and the town of Lee. Monday, June 29 from 4:30-5:45 p.m. Closing reception for the "Jacobs

Pillow in Lee, Mass" exhibit at the Lee Library. Sponsored by the Lee Chamber of Commerce, speakers are Alex Hedding, Vinny Vigilante and Bill Yehle.

All events are free and open to the public. People may visit <https://linktr.ee/jacobspillowinleemass> for more information.

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