

"It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced."
 — Abraham Lincoln

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

May 28, 2026 | Vol. 48, No. 5 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

Meredyth Babcock, representing Wild & Scenic Westfield River, paddled down the parade route with a fish in hand. Moore photos on page 12.

Modern and antique cars took part in the parade, including this antique steam-engine tractor.



Turley Publications by Wendy Long

Martha and George Washington stopped for lunch at the Blue Caboose at the Chester Railway Station.

Chester on Track celebrates 35 years

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Dream season becomes nightmare

By Wendy Long
 Correspondent

What if your varsity baseball team went nearly undefeated this season yet failed to make the Western Mass Tournament?

That's the reality for Gateway Regional School's

team this year. According to Coach Deryck Savoy, his team's runs for and against differential is the highest in the state for 2026. But the district's decision to no longer fund any non-league games created a schedule

SEASON, page 11



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Gateway senior catcher Theo DeAngelis-Page and sophomore pitcher Weston Anderson weigh in on their baseball team being unable to play in the tournament.

HUNTINGTON

New selectman guest at May 20 meeting

By Wendy Long
 Correspondent

The town of Huntington's newest Select Board member, Robert Drabiuk attended his first meeting on Wednesday, May 20.

While his term won't officially start until July 1, Select Board Chairman Roger Booth invited him to meetings in the interim, as a means of becoming familiar with current proceedings.

Booth thanked Drabiuk for attending and congratulated him on winning the election. With 113 votes, Drabiuk defeated incumbent William Hathaway (85 votes) in the town election held on Saturday, May 9.

Drabiuk thanked Booth for the warm welcome and said he was looking forward to working with them. At a later point in the meeting that involved reading multiple pages of meeting minutes, Drabiuk quipped, "I know there's a learning curve but I didn't realize speed reading was part of it."

Selectmen Bill Hathaway and John

McVeigh were both present. Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth took minutes in the absence of the Town Administrator.

In a meeting that was largely dedicated to going through the line item budget and reviewing the Annual Town Meeting warrant articles with the Finance Committee, a different item may be of the greatest interest to area residents.

Liquor license application



Robert Drabiuk

A legal notice has been written up and sent to area newspapers announcing a public hearing regarding a liquor license application for the River House Bar & Grill at 200 Worthington Road, doing business as The Rapids Restaurant.

The long-closed restaurant has been the subject of a great deal of speculation, anticipated openings that ultimately fell through and rampant rumors throughout the community. The public hearing on this will be held in Stanton Hall on June 3, 2026 at 5 p.m. This is

SELECTMAN, page 2

BLANDFORD

Three candidates vie for Select Board seat

By Mary Kronholm
 Correspondent

This is a first in recent history for an election contest with three candidates on the ballot for Select Board seat.

The Gateway Regional School District Committee candidate took out nomination papers for this election. There is still an open seat for Blandford on the committee. In order to fill this seat, someone must express interest in serving and meet with the Select Board and a current school committee member to be appointed to serve the unexpired term through 2027.

Bradley Curry

Bradley Curry began his career working for the Highway Department in 2005.

After a year, the superintendent position opened and with encouragement from residents he put his application in. He was selected to be superintendent, initially serving as interim.

Learning the rules and regulations was a process. "Coming from the private sector to public employment was, he said, "a big change."

"I had to learn a lot about the rules and regulations being a superintendent and had good mentors," he said and cited Kathy Stevens of



Bradley Curry
 Candidate for Select Board



Cara Letendre
 Candidate for re-election Select Board



Corrine Shartrand
 Candidate for Select Board

the Mass. Department of Transportation and the Berkshire County Highway Superintendents Association.

I learned a lot in those years. I reached out to the state, to the Attorney General for procurement and different facets of laws and how they affected highway departments. I learned about municipal responsibilities and municipal boundaries.

"It fascinated me to see the difference from private sector to municipal. I tried to learn as much as I could to make my job easier and be better," he said.

He also served on the Emergency Management team with Fire Chief Don Carpenter. "It was just the two of us at the time," he said.

Other positions Curry has held in Blandford include serving as Water Commissioner on several different boards; he said, "The current board has been one of the best," and going

forward the board wants to have a better quality of water.

His goal has been metered water use, but the project has been beleaguered with problems. "I am anxious to fix the meter issues."

He was a constable for about 12 years, served as Tree Warden and has been Highway Superintendent and Tree Warden in Sandisfield and Huntington's Highway Superintendent. Serving different select boards, he has "had the experience of seeing some things are successful and sometimes not."

Curry said he believes he is qualified to be a select board member because he knows where to go to find out how to correct issues.

His vision for the town is to see the town as a "wonderful community to live in, to raise children, to retire to." He added, "I would like to see the town

CANDIDATES, page 7

BLANDFORD

Candidates night draws discussion

By Mary Kronholm
 Correspondent

Considerable discussion revolved around the upcoming Meet the Candidates Night set for Tuesday, June 2 at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall.

The even was put together by George Reichert. According to Reichert he followed a model created by the League of Women Voters.

According to their website, "The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy." There is no political affiliation.

The town has no part in the organization of this event nor is it town sponsored according to Reichert.

All of the candidates on the ballot were invited and should respond to him. To date, (May 19) he has had no comment, questions or contact from the candidates or anyone else.

This is not the first time there has been a "Meet the Candidates" event in Blandford.

DISCUSSION, page 8



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HUNTINGTON



This sea glass frame crafted at a recent workshop sponsored by the Huntington Recreation Committee features whales. Submitted photos

This sea glass frame features sea gulls. Participants enjoyed the class so much, they requested a repeat class in the fall.

Recreation Committee hosts sea glass event

A movie night happens on Saturday, May 30

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Recreation Committee recently held a sea

glass event at Stanton Hall, with 25 participants making frames filled with personalized creations.

It was so well received attendees asked for the com-

mittee to host another one in the fall.

The next event from the committee is movie night on Saturday May 30 at 6 p.m. Admission is free and open to

the public.

The movie is the “2023 Super Mario Bros Movie.” Attendees are welcome to bring comfy chairs, sleeping bags, pillows etc to lay on the

floor and watch the movie.

There will be small snacks provided, but attendees are welcome to bring their dinner, drinks and snacks.



Public library announces upcoming June news and programs

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Director Amanda Loisel announces the calendar of activities at the Huntington Public Library, 7 East Main St., for June.

All events are free and open to the public. Advance registration is required for the block printing workshop and game night if participants want pizza.

People may look at the new plantings on library grounds when they visit.

On Thursday, June 4 at 4

p.m., the library’s Book Club will meet to discuss May’s read “Before the Coffee Gets Cold” by Toshikazu Kawaguchi. The Book Club will be on hiatus for the summer and reconvene in September.

A two-part block printing workshop will be offered on Saturdays, June 13 and June 20 at noon. There are eight spots available. Those interested should register by visiting huntingtonpubliclibrary.org to ensure that space is available. People will learn basic techniques for carving their own 4” x 6”

or 8” x 10” prints.

As usual, the library offers story hours for children of all ages on Mondays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. The Friends of the Huntington Public Library also sponsor a monthly Family Playgroup that will gather on Monday, June 15 at 10:30 a.m. This group has no affiliation with HCHC’s Family Center group.

Two other book clubs meet this month. The Book Swap Club will meet on Tuesday, June 9 at 4:30 p.m.

Instead of everyone reading the same book, the

Book Swap Club is a chance for people to discuss books that they recommend to others.

The bi-monthly Cookbook Club will meet on Thursday, June 25 at 5 p.m. This month’s theme is “colorful foods.” People should dig through their favorite cookbooks or online resources, prepare a colorful dish and bring it in for a potluck meal.

Coworking Coffee Hours will be held on Wednesdays, June 10 and June 24 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.. Remote workers and stu-

dents or, really, anyone with some work to get done are invited to come in for some camaraderie with others. The Keurig and tea pot will be on for added motivation.

June’s “crafternoon” will be held on Thursday, June 11 at 4 p.m. Participants bring in a craft project or choose from the library’s materials to get creative.

The following Thursday, June 18 is the monthly all-ages Game Night, also at 4 p.m. People may choose from the library’s own assorted games including

Pokemo, Scrabble, Twister, and many more or bring in their own to share with others.

Pizza will be served; people should register in advance by visiting huntingtonpubliclibrary.org to guarantee enough pizza for everybody.

Finally, save the date for “Huntington Adventurer’s Guild” summer reading kickoff, which will take place on Saturday, June 27 from 10 a.m.-noon. More details are coming out soon but be sure to mark on the calendars for this “don’t miss” event.

Council on Aging list events

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Council on Aging will be hosting events at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road.

Local author

Local author Steve Hamlin presents “How to Travel on \$50 a Day” on Wednesday, June 3 from 1-2 p.m. Games, summer birthdays and bingo takes place on Tuesday, June 9 from 1-3 p.m. Seniors play board games and enjoy free snacks.

Movie

The movie “Caddy Shack” will be shown on Wednesday, June 10 at 2 p.m. Wednesday, June 17 from 1-2 p.m. is COA Planting Day. Seniors pot up baby plants to start summer off.

Music

Doug Pitteroff and

Santo Tomasine create beautiful music on Wednesday, June 24 from 2-3 p.m.

Chair Yoga

Chair Yoga takes place Wednesdays from 10-11:15 a.m. The fee is \$5 per class.

Blood Pressure Clinic and Tick-borne illness prevention presentation takes place Wednesday, June 10 from 1-2 p.m.

Brown bag programs

Thursdays in June “A Course in Miracles” is offered from 11:30 am-1 p.m. Brown bag program pickup is every third Friday from 10-11:00 a.m. Note : They can not “hold” bags, so people should come pick them up, thank you.

Memory Café

Memory Café is held weekly on Wednesday at 2 p.m. Presentations and music

events are open to cafe participants.

The weekly café provides seniors with activities while their caregivers participate in a support group. The café is open to all with and without memory issues.

The café is made possible by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act and by a grant from the Huntington Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Memory Cafe events are free and open to residents of any community. Free snacks are provided at all events. For more information, people may call Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-5283.

Historical Society to hold open house May 31

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Historical Society will be holding its first open house on Sunday May 31 from 1-4 p.m..

The one room schoolhouse holds a collection of books, documents, maps, artifacts, clothing, tools and other historical items. The Norwich Bridge Schoolhouse Museum is located at the corner of Worthington Road and Littleville Road.

SELECTMAN

from page 1

the first of several steps that have to be accomplished before the restaurant can reopen under its new owners.

Executive session

The board also went into executive session at 5:30 p.m. with Town Accountant Richard Buley “to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel.”

Budget review

One of the longest agenda items was the aforementioned budget and warrant review with members of the town’s Finance Committee, walking through last minute numbers that had been updated or finalized since their previous meeting.

Finance Chair Eric Jensen and Bonnie Boguszewski were present with Andre Alguero attending remotely. Together they walked through the line item budget and warrant articles, with Booth explaining items proposed to be covered through free cash or stabilization accounts.

Vocational education costs were the hard hit for the town this year: 27 new students planned to attend Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, whose tuition went up this year.

Eight students were selected by lottery to Westfield Technical Academy, whose tuition went down. Vocational education costs for the town total \$786,000 next year; two thirds of the town’s certified free cash, totaling \$398,000, will go toward

vocational schools.

ATM and STM

Following discussion, Booth moved to accept the June 1 Annual Town Meeting warrant, which was approved unanimously. Special Town Meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Stanton Hall. Annual Town Meeting will follow at 7 p.m.

Jensen reported that the Finance Committee will meet on May 27. Booth said they would be asked for their recommendations throughout the town meeting.

Other business

In other business, FY ‘27 re-appointments were reviewed and voted upon. The board made a number of decisions, including discontinuing the public safety complex work group and changing term lengths on a few appointments.

Votes had to be taken with care for conflicts of interest. As Deputy Fire Chief, McVeigh abstained from the Fire Chief appointment vote and from being named himself to the Memorial Day Committee. Booth abstained from his own appointment as the environmental certification officer and Franklin Regional Transit Authority representative, both for three years.

Booth and Hathaway each abstained from appointments related to their spouses: Michelle Fieldstad-Booth as an election worker, and Karon Hathaway as an election worker and planning board member for three years. All other appointments on the list were voted as a slate.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

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BECKET

Church hosts Thrift store, breakfast

BECKET – The thrift store at the Becket Federated Church, 3391 Main St., will now be open two Saturdays a month.

The thrift store Saturday schedule is: May 30, June 13, June 27, July 11 and July 25 from 9 a.m.-noon.

The store has antiques, new and gently used dishes, clothing, books, greeting cards, shoes and a lot more. Proceeds benefit the community.

On Saturdays, May 30, June 27 and July 25 there will also be a breakfast. Cost is \$10 per person and baked goods will also be sold.

MONTGOMERY

Music in Montgomery hosts familiar performers

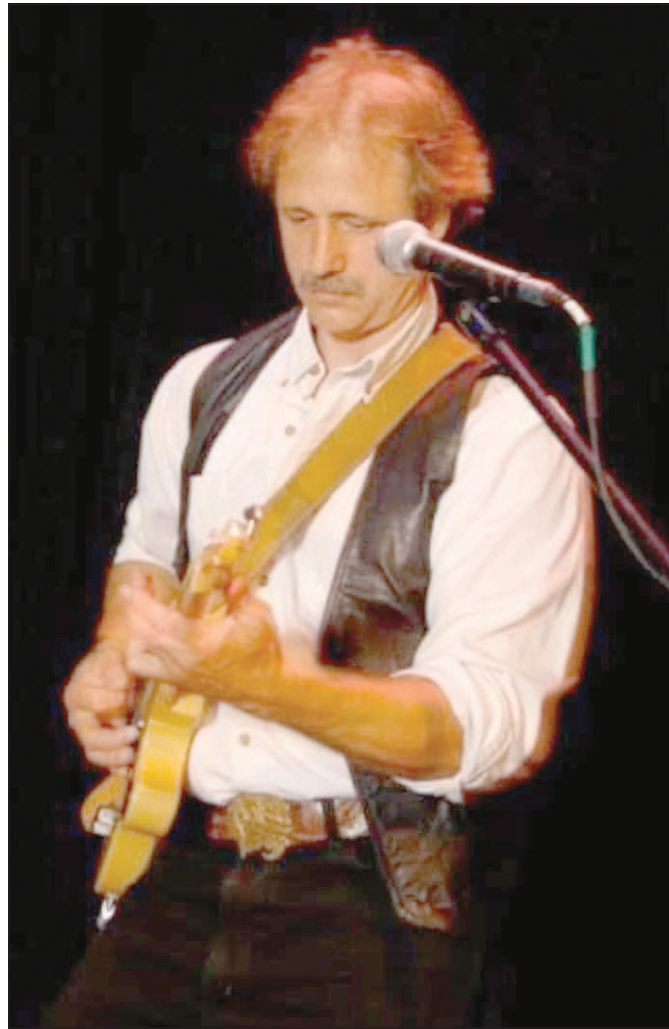
By Wendy Long
Correspondent

MONTGOMERY – Sponsors for the Music in Montgomery program announce the June line up.

Co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and the Gray Catbird Pottery Studio, Music in Montgomery takes place at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road, every Thursday, starting at 3 p.m.

June will feature Jerry and Kara Noble, Barry Searle's group "We Three," Ed Bentley and Friends and Doug Pi and the Harmonics.

Jerry and Kara Noble open the month on June 4. Among Jerry's many accomplishments are a featured series of performances last year at the Bombyx Center



Submitted photo
Barry Searle will perform at Music in Montgomery on Thursday, June 11 at 3 p.m. with his band, "We Three" with Sarah Miller and Pete Rzasa.

for Arts and Equality in Florence.

He also served as the pianist accompanying many faculty and student ensembles at Smith College from 1987 to his retirement in 2020.

In 2023, he was named the music director for the Church of the Atonement in Westfield. With his wife Kara playing bass, their performances are dubbed, "We are the people our parents warned us about."

Barry Searle returns on June 11 with his ensemble called "We Three," which features Searle on guitar and vocals, Sarah Miller on percussion and vocals and Pete Rzasa on vocals, pedal steel and harmonica.

Together they perform a variety of musical styles. Searle is also known for his Wolf Hill Band, who recently performed at the Marigold Theatre, Time Stretchers group and Ravenwood ensembles.

On June 18, Ed Bentley and his friends (tagged "men of a certain age" will cover a range of music, including country, rock and folk.

Bentley performs throughout the region, often joined by Jane Martin Pelletier and Ron Campagna,

but you're never sure who will pop in and join him in Montgomery. Bentley's music career spans back to the '60s with Little Eva and the 70s with The Starlighters.

He plays guitar, bass and the banjitar. You just might catch him on the open mic circuit at Bright Ideas Brewing, Shortstop Bar & Grill or the Southwick Inn.

Closing the month of June will be Doug Pi and the Harmonics on June 25. A driving rock/country guitarist with a deep signature voice, Pi and the Harmonics have headlined this year at the O's in Sunderland, Fishtails in Hatfield and Papa Bob's in Becket. People never know which of Pi's friends will show up in Montgomery, either.

Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians who perform each week.

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

WORTHINGTON

Spaghetti dinner set for June 7

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Rod & Gun Club holds a spaghetti dinner on Sunday June 7 at 5 p.m. Doors opens t at 4 p.m. Dinner is all you can eat. There will be salad and

rolls to start. Spaghetti will be served with homemade meatballs and then dessert. There will also be a Chinese raffle. Cost is \$20 per person. People may call Deana for tickets at 413-433-0009.

RUSSELL

Russell Public Library offers various programs and more to delight its patrons

RUSSELL – The Russell Public Library, is on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3-7 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

The library will be closed on Friday, June 19 in honor of Juneteenth and Saturdays in July and August.

The Russell Public Library Trustees will meet Thursday, June 18 from 3:15-4:30 p.m.

The library will have the adult Monthly Book Club on Tuesday, June 2 from 6-8 p.m. The book is "Where Did You Go, Bernadette?" by Maria Semple. Books are available at the library. People may register by email at rpldirector162@gmail.com or call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Monday, June 1. This will be the final Book Club until September.

Local artisan, Sue Maxwell will hold a beading jewelry workshop on Tuesday, June 16 from 6-8 p.m. Beading materials will be provided or people may bring their own.

Special pendants will be available for purchase for \$5 in cash. Participants may register by email at rpldirector162@gmail.com or call 413-862-6221 and leave a message, or come in and sign up at the library by Friday, June 12. The workshop is limited to the first 12 registrants.

On Saturday, June 20 from 10 a.m.-noon the Russell Public Library's summer Reading kickoff for families. They will begin with face painting, games and fun snacks and then feature "Henry the Juggler," aka Henry Lappen.

He is beloved by audiences everywhere for his zany attempts to defy the laws of gravity. He juggles any number of balls, clubs, rings and members of the audience. He balances strange items on the tip of his nose. Everything is accomplished wordlessly as Henry uses body language and road signs to express himself.

He is known to use innocent bystanders in his act. A juggling workshop will follow. Register by email at rpldirector162@gmail.com or call 413-862-6221 and

leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Thursday, June 18.

Children in grades K to 5 may sign up for "Wild Readers," the Russell Public Library's Summer Reading Program. Every Wednesday from July 1 to Aug. 5, they will learn how to be curious and cautious in the wilds while hiking and camping. There final adventure will be a family camping overnight at Noble View Outdoor Center, on Friday, Aug. 14-Saturday, Aug. 15 from 5 p.m.-10 a.m.

Families must register at Outdoors.org under heading Community, click Local Outings search for Date or title "Camp Like a Pro Family Overnight." They may book their tent site at Noble View by calling 603-466-2727 for one night Friday, Aug. 14.

Cost is \$30. All food for the overnight will be provided by Russell Public Library.

Everyone is welcome to come to the library this summer to complete the Appalachian Trail with us.

Parents may bring their children ages 0-4 years for a weekly interactive story

time with Maggie Lufkin on Thursdays from 10-11 a.m.

Adults may join local herbalist Gayle LaScala, for a botanical beauty program on Tuesday, June 23 from 6-8 p.m.

Participants will learn

about how the plants they'll be using work on the body, so a little bit of physiology, how essential oils help, recipes and hands-on product making plus some pre-made gifts like lotion/face cream.

There will also be herbal

teas and treats too. All materials will be provided. People may register by email at rpldirector162@gmail.com or call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Thursday, June 18.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Help, Social Security Administration says I'm not eligible for benefits

Dear Rusty:

Help, the Social Security Administration says I didn't pay enough into my Social Security account, despite being a business owner and paying taxes.

What can I do?

Signed:
Self-employed American

Dear Self-employed:

For all potential SS beneficiaries, it is very important to know how Social Security determines if you are eligible for retirement benefits: Everyone including the self-employed must have earned at least 40 "quarter credits" contributing to the SS program, which is usually about 10 years' worth of earnings.

You can earn up to four "quarter credits" per year, depending on your earnings including your net earnings from self-employment. For example, this year (2026) you will get one "quarter credit" for each \$1,890 of earnings, up to four credits maximum for the year.

As a self-employed business owner, only your net earnings are counted, e.g., after all your reported business deductions are taken. The SSA gets your earnings information from the IRS, so SSA goes by whatever information you submitted in the self-employment income tax returns you submitted to the IRS over the years.

If you don't have at least 40 "quarter credits" over your lifetime, you won't be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits.

The best way to further investigate this is to create your personal "my Social Security" online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. When you have done that, you will be able to see how many quarter credits you

currently have (apparently less than 40) and determine how much more you must earn to be eligible for SS retirement benefits.

For example, if you have 36 or more credits now, you could likely work just another year or part of a year, to be eligible for SS benefits next year. Knowing how many "credits" you now have will tell you how much more in annual net earnings from self-employment you must have to become eligible for SS benefits.

When you create your online SS account, you will also be able to see your entire lifetime record of your earnings reported to Social Security and you should review that record to make sure that your lifetime earnings have been correctly reported to Social Security.

If there are any discrepancies in your lifetime earnings record, they can be corrected by using form SSA-7008. You can find additional guidance on this at the following SSA web link: www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf.

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



GUEST COLUMN

What is "lifestyle medicine"?



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

We've known for decades that the foods we choose to eat and the habits (good and bad) we develop have a profound impact on our quality of life and health. At your regular appointments with your primary care provider, you are probably quizzed about your diet, alcohol consumption, drug use and level of activity.

Typically, doctors don't have the time during the 7½ minutes they spend with you to connect the dots and help you make meaningful changes in those aspects of your life. It's not their fault; most of them are at the mercy of insurers and corporate overlords.

So, it's usually up to us to change our lifestyle.

A branch of medicine emerged about 30 years ago – lifestyle medicine – in which an integrated group of practitioners, from internists to gastroenterologists to psychologists to nutritionists to pharmacists, supports people on this journey.

Lifestyle medicine gained momentum in the 2010s because of the explosion of chronic diseases, rising health-care costs, stronger long-term data linking lifestyle to health, and dissatisfaction with medication-only approaches.

ponent of people exercising and eating healthier in order to take control of their own health.

So, there are areas where MAHA and lifestyle medicine overlap, but the ACLM emphasizes that it's a health-care approach, not a political movement.

Lifestyle medicine supports vaccines, research-based conventional treatments and standard medical guidelines. Practitioners would agree that improving diet, sleep and stress management is good public health policy, and those tenets exist independently of politics.

That said, the ACLM supports coming changes in Medicare that are in alignment with its goals. The Make America Healthy Again: Enhancing Lifestyle and Evaluating Value-based Approaches Through Evidence (MAHA ELEVATE) for Original Medicare, was announced in December. Launching later this year, it will provide funding for "evidence-based, whole-person care approaches" not currently covered by Original Medicare.

I don't think there's anything about lifestyle medicine that's inherently controversial or political. Those six pillars are certainly within the realm of traditional medical practice. And you can use the pillars on your own to improve your health, whether that means eating more plant-based foods, practicing mindfulness for stress reduction, going out to lunch with friends, quitting tobacco or taking a daily walk.

But many people need the advice and support of medical professionals to make the changes they need to become healthier and manage chronic diseases. If that sounds like something you need, you can learn more about lifestyle medicine at lifestylemedicine.org and see if it would be a good fit for your health-care journey.

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.

As long as you have a diagnosis of a chronic disease and are treated by a licensed health-care professional, it's likely your insurance company will cover care from a lifestyle medicine practice. Services like "wellness coaches" or "lifestyle programs" may not be covered.

Now, if all of this sounds a bit like Make America Healthy Again (MAHA), the signature program of our current health and human services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., you're not wrong. Kennedy is a pro-

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



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ADDRESS
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

Turley Publications, Inc.

www.turley.com

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ISSN NO. 0747-2471

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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.

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.



Corrections policy

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

FLORENCE

Florence Bank awards \$150,000 to local nonprofits

FLORENCE – Forty organizations across the Pioneer Valley came together at Florence Bank's annual Customers' Choice Community Grants Program reception to network and accept a total of \$150,000 in awards.

The annual event took place at the Garden House in Look Park in Florence. Recipients praised Florence Bank not only for its generosity but also for providing a space to celebrate area nonprofits and their dedication to the community.

"Our Customers' Choice Community Grants program is very unique, as it gives a voice to our customers and their preferences on where we allocate the grants," said President and CEO Matt Garrity. "We enjoy having the chance to connect with each of them and are proud to support the work they do for our communities."

The grants program was founded in 2002 and, through it, Florence Bank customers are invited to vote for their favorite local nonprofit in hopes it will receive a share of grant funding.

Voting takes place all

year long, online at florence-bank.com/vote and in bank branches, and each customer has only one vote. To qualify for a community grant, organizations must receive at least 50 votes. In 2025, over 7,500 votes were cast, making 40 nonprofits eligible for a grant.

Out of the 40 nonprofits, there were five first-time recipients including Anne T. Dunphy School, Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity, Northampton Cycling Club, Northampton Musical Booster Club and Williams-Boltwood Project.

Once again, Food Bank of Western Massachusetts in Chicopee received a \$5,000 grant, as it has for the past six years. The nonprofit has received a Customers' Choice grant each of the 24 years the program has been offered.

In addition to Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, these organizations received a \$5,000 grant: Amherst Survival Center, Cancer Connection in Northampton, Dakin Humane Society in Springfield, Easthampton Community Center, Friends of Forbes Library in Northampton, Friends



Submitted photo

Non-profit organizations attended Florence Bank's Customers' Choice Community Grants reception at the Garden House in Look Park, Florence.

of Northampton Legion Baseball, Friends of the Williamsburg Library, Goshen Firefighters Association, It Takes A Village in Huntington, Northampton Survival Center, Our Lady of the Hills Parish in Haydenville, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School in Hadley, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Florence.

The following organizations also received

an award: Friends of M.N. Spear Memorial Library in Shutesbury, \$4,562.90; Manna Soup Kitchen in Northampton, \$4,179.10; Williams-Bolton Project in Goshen, \$3,795.31; Ludlow Boys & Girls Club, \$3,795.31; Thomas J O'Connor Adoption Center in Springfield, \$3,624.73; Williamsburg Firefighters Association, \$3,496.80; Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, \$3,496.80;

Smith Vocational High School PTO in Northampton, \$3,454.16; BARC, Inc. in Belchertown, \$3,454.16; Anne T. Dunphy School in Williamsburg, \$3,411.51; Northampton Community Music Center, \$3,326.23; New Hingham Regional Elementary School PTO in Chesterfield, \$3,198.29; Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity in Florence, \$2,899.79; Friends of Lilly Library in Florence,

\$2,899.79; Belchertown K-9 Unit, \$2,899.79; Bright Spot Therapy Dogs in West Brookfield, \$2,771.86; Grow Food Northampton, Inc. in Florence, \$2,729.21; Edward Hopkins Educational Foundation in Hatfield, \$2,643.92; Northampton Musical Booster Club, \$2,601.28; Amherst Neighbors, \$2,601.28; Northampton Cycling Club, \$2,515.99; Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School in South Hadley, \$2,515.99; First Churches of Northampton, \$2,388.06; Shriners Hospital for Children in Springfield, \$2,345.42; Kestrel Land Trust in Amherst, \$2,217.48 and Hospice of the Fisher Home in Amherst, \$2,174.84.

People may visit florencebank.com/cc-2026 to view the complete list of grant recipients.

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873 and serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield and Springfield.

GOSHEN

Council on Aging lists events

GOSHEN – The Council on Aging announces the June luncheon on Tuesday, June 9 at noon in John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St.

This month they will have Jerry cooking the meal. Choices are chicken piccata with pasta or caneloni bean piccata. Piccata is a bright and tangy lemon sauce with capers.

There will also be vegetables and a salad. Dessert will be from Ashley's Bakery in Worthington. Seniors should call Kerry at 413-268-9354 by Tuesday, June 2 to let her know they are attending and their choice of chicken or vegetarian beans. Suggested donation to the COA of \$5 is greatly appreciated.

On Wednesday, June 3 games group meets in the library from 2-4 p.m. There are a variety of games to choose from. Playing games has many benefits including enhanced cognitive function, reduced stress, and increased social connection. All are welcome to attend.

On Friday, June 5 Community Connections meets from 10-11 a.m. This month, they will meet outside at the large accessible picnic table in the Goshen Community Park across from the Town Hall.

Rain will cancel the

meeting.

Jennifer O'Connell leads the discussion and she brings a few fun activities to do together. Participants may bring their own coffee or tea for this hour long event. It's a great way to start a Friday.

On Tuesdays, June 16 and June 23 Highland Valley Elder Services delivers grab and go meals to Goshen COA. Participants pick up their lunch at the Goshen Town Hall from 12:30-1 p.m.

The lunch for June 16 is a choice of Greek chickpea salad or tuna salad and the lunch on June 23 is a choice of teriyaki chicken or spinach and cheese quiche.

The meals also include milk, vegetables, and dessert. There is a suggested \$4 donation given to Highland Valley to offset the cost of the meal. Seniors may call Kerry at 413-268 9354 if they would like to sign up to get these nutritious and delicious meals.

On Saturday, June 27 from 1-3 p.m. there will be an ice cream social at Tilton Town Field. Rain location is Town Hall.

The COA will have ice cream and all sorts of toppings for people to make a delicious sundae. The local band Sidetracked will be

there from 1-3 p.m. playing live music. Participants should wear their dancing shoes.

Sidetracked is a multigenerational band with members ranging in age from 35-72. They play all different genres roots, rock, country and blues for all occasions and ages.

The band is sponsored by a grant from the Goshen Cultural council/MA Cultural council. People should bring their own chair. All ages are welcome. In the case of inclement weather, this event will be held in the Goshen Town Hall.

On Sunday, June 17 from 2-4 p.m. crafts group meets in the library. People should bring their craft project they have been working on at home and come to work together.

Some knit, some sew, some crochet, some color. Just bring it along. They are an encouraging group and it is always fun to chat and have a few laughs while creating.

On Monday, June 18 from noon-2 p.m. technology help is in the library. People can ask questions regarding their computer, phone, tablet or any other technology related question and the technicians will do their best to help.

NORTHAMPTON

Porter-Phelps-Huntington-Museum offers free admission to Northampton residents

HADLEY – The Porter-Phelps-Huntington-Museum, 130 River Drive, announces Community Days 2026 on Saturday, June 13 and offers free admission and refreshments to residents of Northampton, Hatfield, Deerfield and Whatley on that day.

A free tour explores stories about the rich network of enslaved, indentured and free people, who lived and worked at Forty Acres over five generations. Following the tours, guests are invited to view a new exhibit Forty Acres and The American Revolution; Stories of Independence and Servitude, and enjoy complimentary refreshments on the back porch. Visitors

are encouraged to enjoy the grounds and bring a picnic.

The Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum is the designated Way-Point Center for the National Connecticut River Scenic Byway. A trail system begins at the museum, traverses the farm fields along the river and continues up the old buggy path to the top of Mount Warner, where the farm's cattle grazed in the 18th century. Trails are improved and open year round.

The Porter-Phelps Huntington Museum sits on ancestral Nonotuck lands. The House was built in 1752 by Moses and Elizabeth Porter and was central to the 600-acre farmstead

known as "Forty Acres." Today, the 114 acre property is "Forty Acres and Its Skirts," a National Register of Historic Places district that includes the PPH museum and homestead, and neighboring Phelps farm, surrounded by protected farmland, forest and river frontage.

The Museum contains a collection of the belongings of seven generations of one extended Hadley family and portrays the activities of family members, enslaved people, artisans, household servants, and farm laborers who made "Forty Acres" an important social and commercial link in local, regional and national cultural and economic networks.

EASTHAMPTON

bankESB offers free shred day

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB invites customers and members of the community to a free shred day on Saturday, June 13 at their Easthampton office located at 241 Northampton St.

Local residents can reduce their risk of identity theft by bringing old mail, receipts, statements or bills, cancelled checks, pay stubs,

medical records or any other unwanted paper documents containing personal or confidential information and shredding them safely and securely for free.

Valley Green Shredding, a professional document destruction company, will be on site in the bank's parking lot and can accept up to two boxes of documents per

car. No appointment is necessary.

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton. Through their charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, supports non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties.

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 6:30 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Blandford

Pastor Tom Crouse
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.

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.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

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

Westhampton Congregational Church, UCC

Pastor Carol Smith
1 Tob Rd., Westhampton, MA 01027
(413) 527-4204
Sunday Worship at 10 a.m.

BLANDFORD



Five College Movers take shelving out the Porter Memorial Library at Town Hall.



Five College Movers bring shelving down the hallway at Town Hall.



Library Director Nicole Daviau starts the process of shelving the collection in the library's new temporary home at Town Hall.

Library moves temporarily to Town Hall



Nathan Crane assembles shelving to accommodate books.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

By **Mary Kronholm**
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – The Five College Movers were at the crack of dawn on Tuesday, May 19 to move the library contents to the Town Hall location

Lock, stock and barrel, it all went. Staff was there as well as Skanska Owners Project Manager Aaron Singer.

Bags of books, shelving, toys' amusements – it all got carted. The parade went from the library to the moving truck to the Town Hall and then

down the hall to the new location.

Nathan Crane worked at assembling shelving. Director Nicole Daviau supervised everything at one end while library staff member Michele Crane was at the library.

The movers were gone by mid-afternoon, but left a lot of work for the library staff to re-assemble the collection in the new space. It is just before the Council on Aging room on the right hand side of the corridor.

The library's new quarters will be open officially on Monday, June 8 at 2 p.m.

250th Celebration Parade invites marchers

BLANDFORD – All Blandford children are invited to march in the Saturday, June 27 250th town-wide Celebration Parade.

All children of all ages are invited to participate in the parade. Marchers should wear comfortable clothing

and bring a water bottle.

Everyone will meet at the Town Hall parking lot at 10:30 a.m. that morning to line up. People should text Jennifer Girard at 1-860-573-9606 or email to boh@town-ofblandford.gov to sign up to march.

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BLANDFORD

Katherine McDonough seeks school committee seat

BLANDFORD – Katherine McDonough has lived in town since May 2025.

She and her husband Rory moved up from Westfield because they liked the rural area, the privacy and the quiet space.

She has chosen to run for the Gateway Regional School District School Committee representing Blandford's students and took out nomination papers the night of the caucus, March 2.

She said she is "excited to serve Blandford in this capacity and bring my experience in education to this important role."

She has worked at West Springfield High School as an educator for the past eight years and said she has a "very clear understanding of the importance of school committees in Massachusetts." She teaches English Language Learners with especially tailored individualized programming and attention.

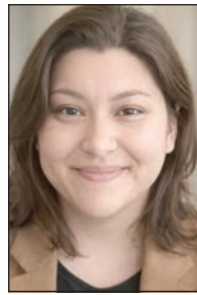
While at West

Springfield High School, she co-taught and supported ELL students in grades 9 through 12 through inclusion in biology for three years.

She has a clear understanding of the school committee concept and what school committees can accomplish.

"I have seen firsthand the responsibility and impact a school committee can have on the quality of education students receive," she said.

When she learned that no one in town was planning to run for school committee, "I felt compelled to step forward because I believe it is so important for Blandford to have a voice," she said, adding that in a state like Massachusetts, "where education is highly valued, it is important that our rural



Katherine McDonough

towns are not left behind and that we ensure our children are getting the quality education they need and deserve."

The McDonoughs are parents of two small children, ages one and three. Before coming to Massachusetts, she taught at American International School of Utah, in Murray, Utah. Her initial position in a Massachusetts school system was at the Excel Academy Charter School in Chelsea. She taught ELL students at both schools.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and arts in linguistics from Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington and a Master of Arts in teaching French as a Foreign Language and Teaching English as a Second Language from New York University.



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Corinne Shartrand, left and George Reichert go over their organizational planting plan for Bicentennial Park in Blandford.

Bicentennial Parks getting ready for 250th celebration

BLANDFORD – George Reichert and Corinne Shartrand met Tuesday, May 19 and crafted an organizational plan for sprucing up

the town's 250th celebration.

They are looking for volunteers to put in about 75 plants in the park on Saturday, June 6 from 10

a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Help as long as you can," said Reichert. Volunteers may call him at 413-348-9909 to sign up or with any questions.

CANDIDATES

obtain a certain amount of growth – allowed by the residents. Residents should have the input to control growth"

"I don't want to see the town wither up and die," he said, "but to thrive."

He does not want to see the town industrialized. "We thrive as a small community based on family values. The town has a lot to offer, a nice place to relax and enjoy community." And he wants people to participate in their community.

As far as problems that need attention, he believes the state is trying to force the small towns in to something that people don't want, citing the overturning of the moratorium for commercial solar installations. "The town has gone to the state seeking help and was refused."

He said the town needs to "look at its infrastructure to address issues."

Regarding the town's financial stability, it needs to be looked at. "We need to be solvent, on a stable footing, and we need to continue seek other funding sources." Assessments and billings have to be "accurate" and the town must "actively collect correct amounts."

Curry would like to serve the town on the select board because he believes his experience on other boards and in other communities can be helpful. "We are heading in the right direction and we need to get back into the community spirit," he said.

He grew up in a small town, and understands the community spirit.

Right now, Battery Energy Storage System is the big issue. It will be something else in three years. Having worked with legislators and other government officials over time, he knows how to look for solutions.

"Transparency" is important. "People don't realize the differences between private and public sector activities. "Public sectors move so much more slowly," he said.

A 20-year resident, he likes to be able to walk, speak to his neighbors, being in the country and natural surroundings. He likes living in the small, tight-knit community, the sense of camaraderie.

Equating a municipality with running a business is "a fine line." His first experiences in municipalities were startling because of the checks and balances. "It

would be possible to amend a business model to run a municipality but you have to respect the rules and regulations that govern."

He attended a small junior college and is certified for metal working. He owned a small logistics company. His youth was spent in Arora, West Virginia. His education was completed in Maryland. He was a member of the American Builders and Contractors Association. His prior work includes building fire trucks, roofing and well drilling.

For fun, Curry likes to motorcycle, work on the vegetable garden, be out in the woods with nature. "I just enjoy being outside," he said, glad to live adjacent to the Chester/Blandford State Forest.

Cara Letendre

Cara Letendre, incumbent candidate for re-election to the Select Board, has contributed to the town as an adult in many capacities and areas beginning in 2009.

She brought back the town's Halloween party with the Recreation Committee. She co-edited the Blandford Bugle for several years and said, "I was proud to be part of an initiative that helped restore a sense of optimism..."

She was the Administrative Assistant to the Select Board starting in 2012 and was elected as Select Board member in 2017. She also served as Water Department secretary.

She brings to the table her years of municipal experience as both an employee and elected official with accumulated knowledge of municipal finances, budgeting and who does what and what expectations are and should be.

"If there's a problem, I know who to go to" for resolution.

She fosters transparency with adherence to Roberts Rules of Order and the state's Open Meeting Law.

She sees town leadership as a team effort which has already accomplished much in the way of reforms.

She cited highway department upgrades, a new fire rescue truck, over a million dollars in road improvements, a combined police Chester/Blandford department.

The town has improved tax collection from being in the position of having the fourth lowest collection rate

in the state with nearly a million dollars owed in back taxes, a three-year history of negative free cash and no stabilization funds – one of only four municipalities.

"Because of those reforms," she said, "the town was able to invest strategically without borrowing." Free cash was used for highway equipment, multiple sources funded road improvements.

While select board administrative assistant, she was given oversight responsibilities where there had been no oversight before to help rectify the "dire straits" the town faced, i.e., no free cash, poor tax collection etc.

At the 2019 State of the Town address, "I felt immense pride" in the town's accomplishments and a representative from the Department of Revenue later told her that he used Blandford as a model for other "struggling towns."

When Joshua A. Garcia joined the town as Administrator, she saw and assisted with changes in developing a budget calendar, personnel policy and other ways to create a smoother running municipality.

Her "passion and dedication to the town," she feels, "has only increased."

She continued, "There are so many projects that we have started that I want to see completed" going forward. I would like to see us make headway with the Fire Department and Highway Department."

She would like to see a Water Superintendent hired and that department "running a little more smoothly."

Water is not sustainable as it is running, according to Letendre, and she added, "I would like to continue to be a part of whatever the next phase of what ever that is," as the department moves forward.

The town has made headway with the highway department, and would like to see it "continue to grow." She would like to maintain the budget process and wants to see a full member Finance Committee.

Regarding solar and energy storage, she wants to make sure "the state understands the pressure that's put on us."

She would like to see Cobble Mountain Road opened, "at least to recreation."

Letendre wants to remain on the board

"because I feel like our team right now is really strong. There is a wealth of knowledge I bring to the team that is really beneficial..."

She cited working with Jackie Coury with her "human resources knowledge and management knowledge" combined with Letendre's municipal knowledge, all of which "has been really helpful to the town."

What she likes about the town is that there is "community." If she needed help, she knows all she has to do is ask. "That is why you want to raise your kids in this town," she said. "There's so much to love about Blandford."

Balancing municipality and business techniques as far as the financial side of the town goes is important. But it is equally important to maintain the small-town feel "we try to keep that balance."

She holds an associate degree in Liberal Arts from Holyoke Community College and a degree in cultural anthropology from UMass and has a Master's Degree in Special Education from Walden University. She has worked as a Special Education teacher for 15 years.

For fun, right now her hobby is "carpooling" her children; she loves "to watch their track meets and take them to Smith College library to do homework, ride bike trails, walk the dogs and gardening."

Corinne Shartrand

Corinne Shartrand, a Blandford native, has helped the town in several areas.

She said, "I personally, specifically myself, have not contributed. What I have done is contributed with the entire group. So, I don't want to take credit for doing bylaws."

She serves on the Energy Project Siting and Engagement Committee established by vote of the Select Board to serve as the Town's centralized body for managing and responding to all matters related to proposed energy projects.

As a member of this committee, she helped revise and update zoning bylaws. "We worked as a team to strengthen the solar and Battery Energy Storage System bylaws," she said, stressing that this was a "group effort and added, "everything that I've done here is with the help of these

wonderful people in town."

She is also a member of the Conservation Commission and worked to tighten wetland bylaws and has made site visits ensuring compliance. She was instrumental in bringing Conservation Agent Sabrina Pooler on board and considers her "a real asset."

She is working with ten others in Bicentennial Park, "we are going to pretty it up" in conjunction with the weekend celebration commemorating the 250th Anniversary. She hopes to have children paint rocks for the park. There will be additional flower plantings. She is also helping with the June 27 parade, cookout and activities.

There will be a Welcome to Blandford sign with flowers and decorations on the wedge at Route 23 and Cobble Mountain and Birch Hill roads.

She went to Oakham with others from town to hear concerns about Battery Energy Storage System and is in touch with surrounding communities about energy projects also.

"Once farmlands gone, it's gone...you can't grow anything in the land... because of the contaminants," she said. "I want to protect."

She brings to the table her union and management experience with Strathmore Paper, citing Occupational Safety and Health Administration and safety, and her ability to research.

What she believes qualifies her to be a Select Board member is her ability to prioritize. Having supervised over 120 men, she prioritized needs – in the right order; she can explain things clearly. She knows how to "organize...good listening skills... and I care."

Looking ahead, "I would like to get Blandford back on track, I would like to see us put all of our differences aside, and come together as a community like it used to be. I want people to feel comfortable around each other," she said, adding that division "hurts my soul."

She is independent, listens to both sides and then makes a decision.

Problems facing the town, besides the differences, is the water issue. "It needs to be addressed... people are paying the same amount for water for two people in a household of ten...it's not fair."

from page 1

Taxes are another issue. "It's so hard to control the taxes when the state delegates how much they have to go up every year." She said that this year it was mandatory, a 2.5% it (the tax rate) has to go up. Additionally, she said that the town is getting 24 more children, who will be going to Gateway, and, "it's going to cost more."

"I want to be financially responsible," she said, "and have financially responsible solutions that meet the town's needs. We need to look at other places, do onsite visits. She cited Peru's new fire house which is a Quonset hut.

Regarding the financial stability of the town, she said that the town has to be careful where it spends. "Spending \$250,000 for a fire house and nothing happened." The town, she believes, needs to look at things before spending and explore options that make financial sense.

She wants to run for the office because she loves the town, loves living here, was born here and said, "I want Blandford to survive. I don't want it to die."

Younger generations need to come and by having the community be a community again will help.

Getting people to be involved in the community is important.

Born in Blandford on Wyman Road, she moved to Russell where she grew up. In 2005 moved to Arizona and in 2016 returned to "my home town." She likes the rural atmosphere, the parks and the Knittel trails. "It's really pretty up here."

Using a business model for the town, she said requires "mindful of spending."

She added, "We need smart business decisions in the financial area. We have to critique everything, and the most important thing is: what does the town want?" And to find funding sources.

She holds an associates degree in business from Holyoke Community College and at Strathmore she started her career as a warehouse worker, moved up to group leader and then became the first woman supervisor.

In her spare time, she is an animal rescuer and has horses, cats and dogs and now is caring for Bob, a horse, who has Lyme disease.

BLANDFORD

DISCUSSION

from page 1

Chair Jackie Coury said she was leaning towards “saying no” to allowing the use of the Town Hall for the Meet the Candidates event because she did not want people to think “we’re doing this. We’re not.”

David Hopson asked the board if other groups used the Town Hall and under “what jurisdiction” would the board turn the event away.

There is no jurisdiction. The town allows many groups to use space in the Town Hall, for instance, the Town Democratic Committee meets there regularly.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera was directed to contact Town Counsel following up for “due diligence” for the matter. She said Tuesday, according to Town Counsel, “There is no conflict.”

The event stands.

HCAA request

Maureen Boomsma, representing the Hilltown Community Ambulance Association asked that the town donate millings, approximately 20 yards not needed by the town, to help build a foundation for a storage trailer in Huntington. Cara Letendre is looking into the legalities of donating the millings to see if any special steps need to be taken.

Farm fresh produce

Council on Aging Director brought the board up to date on the Hilltown Community Development Corporation for deliveries of farm fresh produce. Deliveries will be made to the Town Hall and the COA will deliver, or the recipients can pick their orders up.

Planning Board

Planning Board Chair Greg Garfield informed the board of the vote of approv-

al by the Planning Board for the newly revised bylaws for all things energy related.

Town Administrator report

Ferrera told the board the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting and the budget was set and she is working on a date for an audit for FY 2026 with Roselli & Clark.

She said she is working on a quote for work on the gazebo and the post office. It is important that we focus on maintaining what we have,” she told the board, “as opposed to waiting for things to go disastrously wrong and having to spend a ton of money.”

Returning to the budget with a question regarding a 98% increase in wages for the assessor’s clerk, Ferrera responded that the budget was established for the job, not the individual and that a great deal of work had been

done to catch up and fix, the clerk only works two days a week now instead of three.

Coury provided an Energy Projects Sitting and Engagement Committee update, the bylaws have been updated, a letter to the legislators regarding the impact on small rural communities.

Application fees

Coury discovered that the state charges much higher fees to cover the manpower working on the application process and the town should do likewise.

Applications can come into the town almost anywhere. The application should come to the Town Clerk to be stamped received, and that is when the clock starts ticking for the 65-day review process. The applications have to come in in person, according to Garfield, and the application has to be com-

plete, as determined by the Planning Board.

Planning Board positions

Coury made a plea for more members to serve on the Planning Board. She is also asking other towns about sharing a position to assist the Planning Board.

Bicentennial Park

Corinne Shartrand had four quotes for repair to stone the retaining wall in Bicentennial Park from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Mini-town meeting

Hopson asked about the Mini-town meeting, which he was told had already happened. The bylaws say it has to be at least two weeks before the Annual Town Meeting to give residents the opportunity to ask questions about the warrant and the budget.

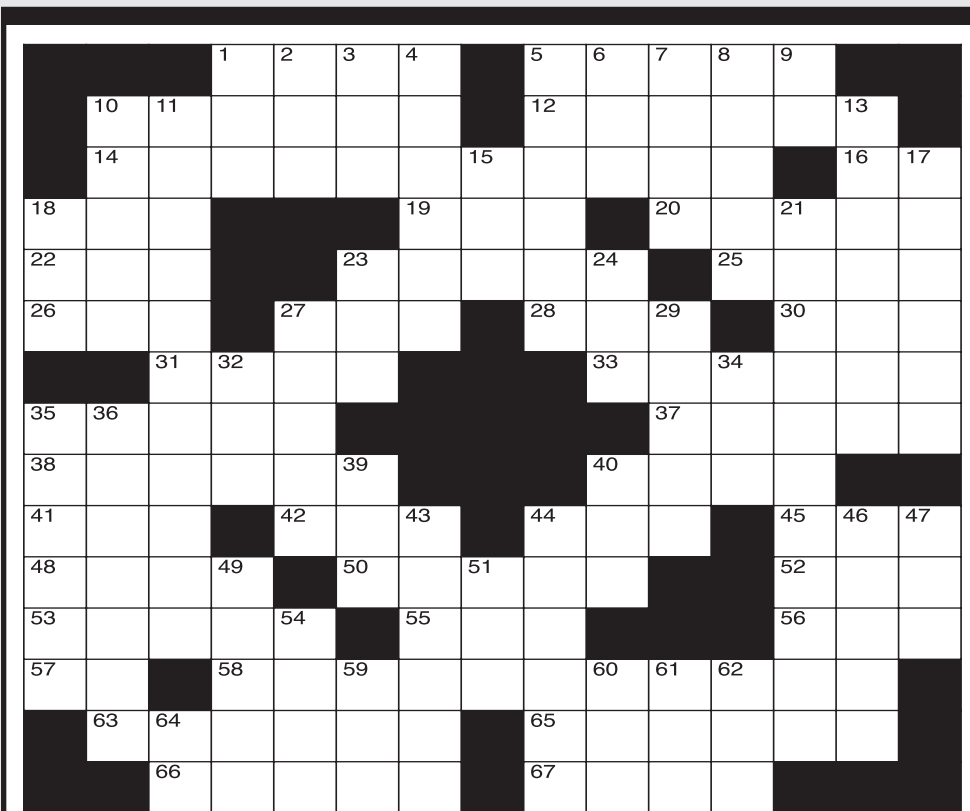
Hopson said traditionally people expect the meeting to be two weeks prior to the ATM, with a presen-

tation.

The budget had already been approved at an earlier meeting of the Finance Committee and the Select Board. It was posted as a Finance Committee and Select Board review of the budget.

Other business

In other business, the board continued appointments: Douglas Emo as Inspector of Veterans’ graves through June 2031; JoAnne Auclair to the Historical Commission; Pat Lombardo to the Council on Aging, both positions through June 2029; Cara Letendre to the Franklin Regional Transportation Authority Advisory Board; Nathan Maynard to the Conservation Commission; Adam Dolby as Forest Warden; Judith MacKinnon to the American Disabilities Act committee, all through June 2027.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Streetcar
- 5. Take ___ of it!
- 10. SW Asia peninsula
- 12. Beating wings to escape from a perch
- 14. One who revitalizes
- 16. Indicates position
- 18. Dishonorable man
- 19. Singer King Cole
- 20. Short-tailed marten
- 22. One point east (clockwise) of due north
- 23. The god of the underworld in ancient mythology
- 25. Dirt
- 26. Superconducting super collider
- 27. Not good
- 28. A way to sink
- 30. Unwell
- 31. Follow orders
- 33. Deep ravine

- 35. Perfumery practice
- 37. Indian film director
- 38. Member of U.S. Navy
- 40. Wing-like
- 41. Very fast airplane
- 42. Slang for cigarette
- 44. Most cars still need it
- 45. Political war chest
- 48. Cools down
- 50. Diminish toward one end
- 52. Indigenous person of Thailand
- 53. Combined
- 55. Container
- 56. Expression of satisfaction
- 57. Thou
- 58. Return a favor
- 63. Go over once more
- 65. Removed
- 66. “Silence of the ___”
- 67. Comedian Rogan

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Children’s game
- 2. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 3. Own (Scottish)
- 4. Female follower of Bacchus
- 5. Subsidies
- 6. Protects from weather
- 7. Spanish municipality
- 8. Supermarket chain
- 9. Domain name
- 10. Semitic peoples
- 11. Designs anew
- 13. City associated with Jesus
- 15. Cool!
- 17. Bank employee
- 18. Central nervous system
- 21. Standardized piece of text
- 23. A type of fever
- 24. Baglike structure in a plant or animal
- 27. Threaten persistently
- 29. Aspirations
- 32. Baby’s eating accessory
- 34. Actress Thurman
- 35. Turn into bone
- 36. One who saves you
- 39. Consume
- 40. Swiss river
- 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
- 44. Categories
- 46. Expressed amazement
- 47. It’s important in respiration (abbr.)
- 49. Greek war dance
- 51. Bland, semi-liquid food
- 54. Regard in a specified way
- 59. Taxi
- 60. Naturally occurring solid material
- 61. Feline
- 62. Post-burning residue
- 64. Elevated railroad

THIS WEEK’S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Your curiosity is in overdrive, Aries. Conversations bring exciting ideas, and you might stumble across information that opens a new door. Midweek is perfect for networking.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

A heartfelt conversation may strengthen a relationship that means a lot to you. Projects flow smoothly when you follow your intuition. Treat yourself to a little self-care.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

You may find yourself bringing people together, Libra. A creative hobby or artistic endeavor may inspire you midweek. Trust your sense of balance.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, your steady determination pays off this week. Progress might feel subtle at first, but by the end of the week, you’ll see clear results.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

This week brings a spark of fresh motivation. You’re feeling bold and ready to take action. Plans could pop up unexpectedly and lead to a surprising connection.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

You’re shining brighter than usual. Your natural charisma draws people in, making this a great time to share ideas, pitch a plan, or take the lead on something exciting. Expect compliments.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, this is a great week to dig into something meaningful — whether it’s a personal goal or a long-term project. Your insight is sharp, and others may seek your advice.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Innovative ideas are flowing, Aquarius. You might find creative solutions where others see problems. Collaboration works in your favor now.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, a creative project, music, or art may prove especially inspiring. Spend time near water or in a peaceful environment if possible — it helps you recharge and dream bigger.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21

Gemini, you may find yourself craving cozy vibes, delicious food, and meaningful conversations. A small financial or professional opportunity may be presented midweek.

VIRGO

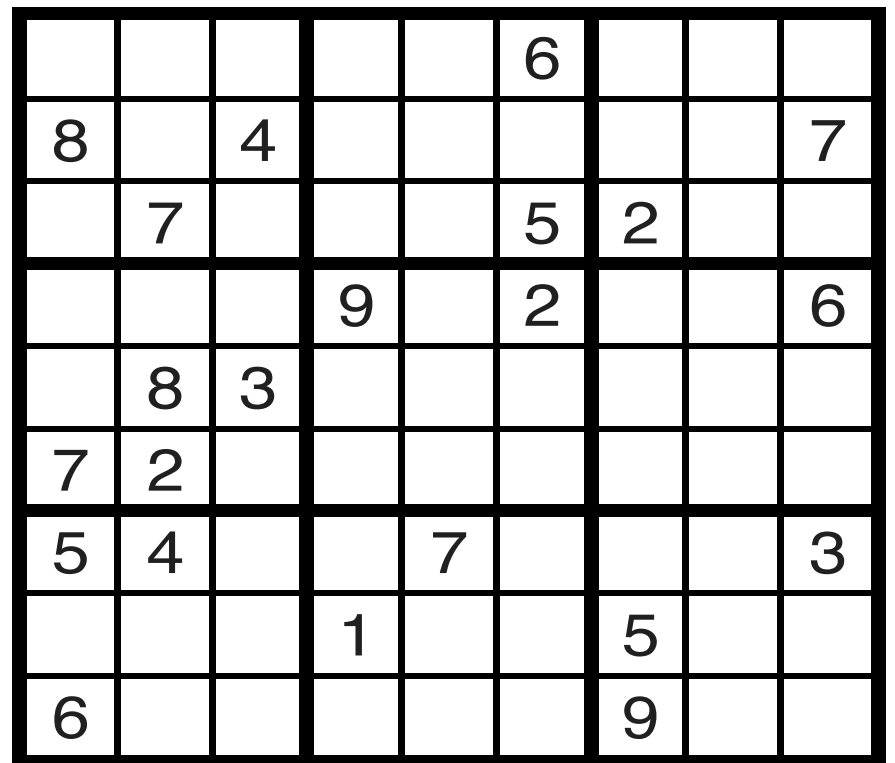
Aug 24/Sept 22

Organization is your superpower right now. Tasks that once felt overwhelming suddenly become manageable. A helpful tip or piece of advice could simplify your routine.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

Adventure calls — even if it’s just trying something new and local, Sagittarius. A fresh experience could inspire future plans.



SUDOKU

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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!

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PLAINFIELD

Plainfield firefighters complete fire training on May 17

PLAINFIELD – This past Sunday, six firefighters from the Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department completed a one-day fire class presented by the Hampshire County Fire Defense Association and hosted by the Williamsburg Fire Department.

They were joined by firefighters from Westhampton and Worthington. They were taught by HCFDA Training Director and retired Northampton Fire Chief Duane Nichols and additional instructors from other county fire departments.

The course titled “Firefighter I-II Skills Review” included auto extrication, vent/chainsaw review, forcible entry and advanced Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus skills challenges.

PVFD member included firefighters Roscoe Weeks, Nate Wooldridge, Olan Thompson, Capt. Dan Shearer, Capt. Andy Stevens and Fire Chief Rob Shearer. Thank to these volunteers for committing their valuable weekend time to refresh their extensive firefighting and rescue skills.



Plainfield volunteer firefighters complete course titled “Firefighter I-II Skills Review” on Sunday, May 17.

Submitted photo

WESTFIELD



Submitted photo

Tri for Jimmy racers pose for a photo before the start of the race in 2025. This year’s race is Sunday, May 31 starting at 8 a.m.

Tri for Jimmy race seeks volunteers

WESTFIELD, – Tri for Jimmy organizers call on the local community to fill vital volunteer roles for the upcoming 2026 race, on Sunday May 31 with the first wave of swimmers starting at 8 a.m.

Volunteer shifts begin as early as 6:30 a.m. for parking mitigation and many key slots run from 7:30-10:30 a.m, making it easy to play a vital role and still enjoy a full Sunday at the park or elsewhere.

Exciting opportunities are also available on Friday for both participants and volunteers to help with schwag bag and trailer packing plus dinner is provided and on Saturday night for transition setup and course sweeping.

All shift details and registration options can be found on our SignUpGenius sign-up form, linked from the home page by visiting triforjimmy.com. All volunteers are invited post-race to celebrate alongside athletes and spectators during the awards ceremony, a chance to witness life-affirming moments as first-timers and experienced athletes achieve their goals.

Keeping athletes safe is the race director’s highest priority and volunteers are instrumental in maintaining that safety by monitoring intersections. They not only alert drivers to the presence of cyclists and runners on the road, but also serve as a critical resource for alerting athletes to traffic concerns and helping them stay aware in key locations.

Their visible presence is also a strong reminder to motorists to slow down and stay alert, reinforcing safety far beyond signage and limited police coverage.

Volunteer sign-up is available linked directly from the homepage at triforjimmy.com.

Please share this announcement with friends, family, or colleagues who might be inspired to volunteer or participate—help us expand our network of community champions for this meaningful event.

During the 2025 race, participant David R experienced the severe reality of unmonitored traffic when a vehicle cut him off. He struck the car at full speed, suffering a terrible crash

that resulted in severe bone bruising and a severe ankle sprain. Despite dealing with ongoing pain and recovering from a recent surgery, he is courageously returning to compete this year. He generously allowed organizers to share his experience to highlight the critical need for comprehensive course safety.

The ultimate goal for the 2026 event is to have every single intersection fully manned by volunteers. By stepping up to guide traffic and protect the course, you ensure that participants like David can challenge themselves without fearing for their safety on the road. Your presence provides peace of mind, allowing athletes to focus completely on achieving their personal best and raising crucial funds for cancer research at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Volunteer roles are accessible for anyone looking to support the community, requiring no prior experience but offering a massive, life-saving impact.

Tri for Jimmy is an annual community triathlon dedicated to providing an inclusive, supportive

racing environment for athletes of all skill levels. From beginners to seasoned professionals, participants race to achieve personal milestones while supporting a vital cause. All proceeds from the event benefit the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute to fund life-saving cancer research and patient care.

Continuing Professional Education Forum offers online educational series

WESTFIELD – The Continuing Professional Education Forum announced its spring educational series.

The online live streaming series is offered free to the public. The program is in part sponsored by Country Bank.

Those professionals seeking Continuing Professional Education credits must pay a nominal fee. The Spring series will offer 22 hours of CPE credits. All programs are three-hours in length and held on Tuesdays, except for the 4-hour ethics session on June 9.

The virtual programs can be accessed by a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. No camera or microphone is needed to participate. Advance registration is required.

Patrick L Parker, founder and managing partner and representatives from Royal Parker Spruce will deliver the following programs: June 2 Urgent Changes to Make in Mental Health &

Workplace Safety Polices; June 16 Hot Bottom Issues: Navigating AI Initiatives, Using AI for HR Purposes

The series will conclude on June 23 with a Timothy Czerniejewski, VP of Commercial Banking at Easthampton Savings Bank.

Established by Josephine Sarnelli, CPA, offers 40 hours of educational programming each year. Its mission is to provide high quality educational programs at a low cost to business professionals, including Certified Public Accountants and others seeking continuing professional educational credits for licensing purposes. It is also open to the general community. For more information, people may visit online at www.cpeForum.org or call 413-746-9067.

Established in 1850, Country Bank is a full-service \$2.2B mutual community bank serving Central and Western Massachusetts with 16 banking centers and two business offices.

Amelia Park Children’s Museum announces plans for ‘Farm in the Woods’

WESTFIELD – Diane Chambers, executive director of Amelia Park Children’s Museum has announced plans for a unique outdoor playscape called Farm in the Woods, scheduled to open this summer.

In 2025, the museum was awarded a grant through the Beveridge Family Foundation for concept, construction and fabrication of the outdoor play space. The funding allowed the museum to hire Panoptic Design/Build, a museum exhibit designer and fabricator, based in West Springfield to create designs.

The project was also

funded in part by the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism with state funding secured by Senator John Velis and Representative Kelly Pease.

“Panoptic is so excited to be working on the Farm in the Woods exhibit for the Amelia Park Children’s Museum, with a community that has earnestly and enthusiastically supported this project. The Farm in the Woods is intended to bring out the best parts of growing up on a farm in New England: Curious observation, secret hideaways, exciting adventures, and always

something new to discover. It examines the place of farms in the broader ecosystem, exploring themes of biodiversity and connectedness with playful interactives. We look forward to visitors coming here for the classic outdoor fun of sand, slides, and garden beds, and returning again and again with their friends and families to keep building curiosity and resilience,” said Panoptic designer Terra Fletcher.

Sponsorships for Farm in the Woods are still available. For more information, contact diane@ameliaparkmuseum.org, 413-572-4014.



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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

COLLEGE NEWS

Olivia Clark graduates Post Univ.

WATERBURY, CONN. – Olivia Clark of Montgomery successfully graduated from Post University on May 3 earning a Bachelor of Arts in psychology with a cumulative GPA of 3.46.

Post University is a private for-profit university in Waterbury, Connecticut. It was founded in 1890 as Post College. The university offers 60 undergraduate and graduate programs in day, evening, and online courses.

HCC Foundation awards \$405K in scholarships

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation has awarded \$405,000 in scholarships to students for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The HCC Foundation awarded 438 scholarships to 422 incoming, current and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. Individual awards range from \$500 to \$5,000.

HCC celebrated this year's recipients and donors at a scholarship reception on May 14. Local students receiving scholarships were: Ian Cartmill of Chester, Andrew Ashlock of Easthampton, Miranda Brown of Easthampton,

Gabrielle Carey of Easthampton, Brenda Carrier of Easthampton (two awards), Christopher Daehne of Easthampton, Richard Damon of Easthampton, Alec Donahue of Easthampton, Isabella Gitana of Easthampton, Nataly Gonzalez of Easthampton, M.B. Gowins of Easthampton, Steven Hoynoski of Easthampton, Elishama Jean of Easthampton, Sawyer Kirley of Easthampton, Skylar Nyt of Easthampton, Eliot Papadakis of Easthampton, Emma Pelletier of Easthampton, Breana Rynn of Easthampton, Keilani Tirado of Easthampton, Sebastian Pacheco of

Florence, Anna Teng of Florence, Carla Zingre of Florence, Celina Almendarez of Northampton, Jenna Baranowski of Northampton, Jennifer Buri Yunga of Northampton, Nyia-Marie Forbes of Northampton, Kathryn Guinn of Northampton, Alyssa Jost of Northampton, Timo Kukharchuk of Northampton, Elian Ortiz Viera of Northampton, Beatrice Parent of Northampton, Somnang Ren of Northampton, Lyra Schaffer of Northampton, Sagrario Turner of Northampton, Julian Vann of Northampton, Alondra Vazquez of Northampton, Zachary Young of Northampton, Jennifer

Labaw of Pittsfield, Amber Coley of Russell,

Yahia Ajam of Westfield, Cari Avalone, of Westfield, Neremy Babu of Westfield, Alicia Booth of Westfield, Abigail Brenzel of Westfield, Angelou Cardoza of Westfield, Rebeca Cuba of Westfield, Rebecca Dixon of Westfield, Kseniia Dromova of Westfield, Finn Evans of Westfield, Gavin Fabiani of Westfield, Liubov Gun of Westfield, Amanda Janisieski of Westfield, Elizabeth Kudrya of Westfield, Milana Mukha of Westfield, Ariana Navarro of Westfield, Michael Navarro of Westfield, Celines Nieves Ramos of Westfield, Kyle

Philleson of Westfield, Chloe Phillips of Westfield and Jeff Gougeon of Williamsburg.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

An alphabetical list of scholarship recipients and their specific awards can be viewed on the HCC website at hcc.edu/scholarships-2026.

SEASON

from page 1

that did not meet the power rankings necessary to make the tournament.

In short, the team with the highest run differential in Massachusetts also has one of the lowest league power rankings. The issue was first brought to the public by School Committee Chair Jason Forgue at their May 13 meeting.

While he applauded the district's decision to stop the practice of students paying athletic fees or "pay to play" as Forgue called it, the resulting loss of revenue led to the decision to play only league games for its sports teams. As a small school, 339 students in grades 6 - 12, according to the Mass. Department of Education, Gateway plays in the lowest league in Western Massachusetts.

Despite this, their power ranking would have improved and likely qualified them for the tournament had they played a couple of higher, non-league teams. Littleville Principal and former Gator athlete and coach, Melissa McCaul explained to the School Committee that improving the team's strength of schedule would put them in a different power ranking and they wouldn't necessarily need to play more games than they did this year.

According to Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo, the league-only schedule went into effect in the last few years. She believes this was the result of the lack of incoming funds and eventual closing of the athletic revolving account once Gateway stopped collecting student fees and charging admission to games; they no longer had a stream of revenue to support additional games, she said.

The baseball team is also in a pickle because they were assigned to a lower league for 2025-2027, due to their record the prior years. Leagues are only reassigned every two years, so there is no opportunity to request a

different league placement until 2027.

Varsity Baseball Coach Deryck Savoy explained that prior to this year they would play every team in their league twice and the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference would also assign them a couple of cross-league games, offering teams greater skill and competition and adding to their power ranking.

In 2026 the PVIAC no longer assigned out-of-league games, leaving it to individual schools to decide and schedule for themselves. The idea, Savoy said, was to create more parity and to address mounting fiscal issues for public schools in Massachusetts.

Savoy researched this and has not been able to find any other teams in the state, who have not opted to schedule cross-league games this year. In addition, because of Gateway's prior record and possibly their size they are in the lowest ranked league, where he said many of the teams are in a rebuilding year.

"Even though we were undefeated, we didn't make the (WMASS) tournament," Savoy said. "If we'd had cross-league games and lost, we still would have gotten in."

Savoy said the team's record did get them into the state tournament, because all teams with at least a .500 win record qualify. The Gators are listed in the Division 5 state tournament; their low power ranking, however, will have them face one of the top teams in the first round.

This is Savoy's third season as Gateway's Varsity Coach and his fifth year with the program. He credits his team's success with their cohesiveness.

Most of them have played together since their Little League years. "We're in a really good place. We're getting good offensive production up and down the entire order and have awesome pitching, led by Jacob Maynard," Savoy said.

Some Gateway teams did play teams outside of their league. The girls varsity softball team, for example, had non-league games in their schedule. This had to happen, Savoy said, because their league had fewer teams and they needed to have as many games as the baseball team under Title IX.

ly mandate came down from the district.

Each year, Bonenfant submits two athletic budgets: one for the league-only needs and one for a full schedule that includes cross-league contests. The minimum number of games needed to qualify for the state tournament is ten.

"We lost out due to strength of schedule and no out-of-league games. It's an MIAA and funding issue."

– Gateway Regional High School Catcher Theo DeAngelis-Page

According to Gateway's Athletic Director, Matt Bonenfant, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association voted to change state tournament qualifications; one outcome is that the WMASS tournament has simply become part of the regular season.

In making his season schedule, Bonenfant adds two "to be announced" games at the end for teams that make up what's left of the WMASS tournament. Teams that don't qualify, he said, play a couple of consolation games.

This, along with Gateway's growing fiscal challenges, has led to a "district-directed mandatory schedule," meaning playing the games in the league schedule only plus the two TBA games.

Three teams this year had cross-league games to establish parity with a mirror team. This year, he had to schedule extra games for the boys soccer and girls softball teams to offer the same number of games as the girls soccer and baseball teams. But all teams, he said, are playing fewer games overall than before the league-on-

One factor in the budgetary discussion is the cost of getting to away games. A Lecrenski bus taken to an away game will cost Gateway between \$468 - \$668, and includes \$40 per hour in wait time for the driver while the game takes place.

Gateway has also purchased its own vans that a team might use; the coach can drive one at no additional cost and the athletic budget only has to pay for the gas. If a second van is needed for the team, another Gateway staff member must be used to drive at a rate of \$25 per hour from start to end of the trip. Depending upon distance, the second van can cost \$125 - \$150 (plus gas) but is still substantially less than a contracted bus.

However, this is further compounded when coaches are already staff members and a game requires transport before the school day ends, resulting in also paying for sub coverage.

With baseball as the example, the home field is not without costs either; that school pays the \$208 per game to cover the umpires.

Bonenfant emphasized Principal Will Sullivan has been extremely supportive of

Gateway athletics and submits the Athletic Director's preliminary budget with the full season schedule.

But with no revenue stream to support the extra games and climbing budget challenges for small, rural schools, Gateway has little option but to trim the schedule as one of many cost-saving measures taken across its schools.

The problem is not unique to Gateway, as evidenced by South Hadley putting eliminating athletics and extra-curricular activities on the table when an override to support the school budget failed to pass.

Solutions are already being sought to rectify this next year, although they will come too late for Gateway's current baseball team. Catcher Theo DeAngelis-Page (senior) and sophomore Weston Anderson, starting pitcher in the May 20 second consolation game at home against Southwick, are frustrated.

"I think it's pretty dumb," said Anderson.

"We lost out due to strength of schedule and no out-of-league games," said DeAngelis-Page. "It's an MIAA and funding issue. We maxed out our season, winning 11 of 12 games by 5 runs or more." The team split their consolation games, beating Division II Amherst by 8-1 and finally breaking their win streak by falling to Southwick by a score of 11 - 1.

While the Gators will go to the State Tournament, their ranking is so low that they will face a very high seed in the first round.

Forgue posed having teams fundraise and/or sell advertising to support the extra athletic costs to restore the school's athletic schedule. School Committee policy seems to both allow and not allow fundraising and Matarazzo said she will ask the Policy Subcommittee to look at clarifying that language. She believes that the school committee would be in favor of fundraising

and selling advertising as a means to support the athletic budget.

Matarazzo believes that the school committee would not support reinstating athletic fees. And Bonenfant points out that it needs to be studied if the school considers reinstating admission fees. If a family of four attended all home basketball games, for example, it would cost them more than paying a \$100 per season athletic fee, he said.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data says that 43% of the district's students are low income. One cost savings idea is to have boys and girls teams compete at the same location and travel together.

Bonenfant said he's also created an annual cross country meet that runs on Gateway's home course at the Littleville Dam. It's a challenging and interesting course and there are seven non-league teams that have committed to that race, with three more on a wait list.

But there are no easy answers for Gateway on this issue. Bonenfant said that the difference in cost between playing the full vs. league-only schedule totals \$27,000.

He fully appreciates kids being able to join a team without paying a sports fee, and has seen it lead to kids trying a sport they've never played before. Advertising is a great idea, but the question would be how it would be executed.

At this point, the only thing everyone agrees upon is that this needs to be looked at and solutions considered. But, again, it's too late for Gateway's talented baseball team.

"I'm not certain that everybody understood how this would play out when this decision was made," Savoy said. "Last time they played this well was 2014. You don't know, in a school this size, when a team like this will come around again."

PUBLIC NOTICES

Chesterfield Planning Board LEGAL NOTICE

A Public Hearing will be held at 6:30 PM on **Monday, June 8, 2026 at 6:30 PM** in the Town Offices, 422 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA to consider the following Zoning Bylaw changes:

Adopt a temporary moratorium bylaw on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), expiring on Sept. 30, 2026, unless ended earlier by a vote of Town Meeting or Extended by a subsequent vote of Town Meeting, Co-located, Accessory and Freestanding BESS of any capacity; and, on the use of BESS in Town Center District (TC), Water Supply District (WS), Floodplain District (FP), Westfield River Protection District (WRP), Mass Wildlife BioMap3 Core Habitats, all per-

manently protected areas, all areas with prime agricultural soils. Adopt a zoning bylaw to amend sections of the Chesterfield Zoning By-law to define and regulate BESS.

A copy of the full proposed bylaws is available for viewing at the Chesterfield Town Clerk's Office.

Sarah Hamilton
Planning Board Chair
05/21, 05/28/2026

**TOWN OF RUSSELL
Public Hearing
June 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Russell Town Hall
65 Main Street
Russell, MA 01071
FY22/23 CDBG Public Hearing
for Proposed Amendment**

The Town of Russell, in association with the Pioneer Valley

Planning Commission, will conduct a public hearing regarding the FY24 Community Development Block Grant Program. The hearing will take place at **6:00 PM on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, in person at the Russell Town Hall, 65 Main Street, Russell, MA 01071**. If the meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, the hearing will take place during the rescheduled Selectboard meeting.

The hearing will be for the purpose of presenting a proposed program amendment for this grant award. The proposed amendment will utilize uncommitted and available funds from the Valley View Avenue project to create a line item for new sidewalk installation on Old Westfield Road. The Valley View Avenue Neighbor-

hood project has met its grant program goal, construction has been completed, and this project is now closed.

All residents with questions or comments will have an opportunity to be heard. Written comments will be received by the Town and may be sent to the Selectboard Office at 65 Main Street, Russell, MA 01071. Written comments will be read aloud during the hearing. For further information or to submit a written comment, contact Evan Mastroianni at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission at (413) 781-6045 or emastroianni@pvpc.org. Persons who require special accommodations should contact the Town prior to the hearing date at (413) 862-6200.

05/28/2026

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Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

WILLIAMSBURG

Williamsburg Cultural Council celebrates grant recipients

WILLIAMSBURG – The Williamsburg Cultural Council will host the 2026 Celebration of Arts and Culture on Saturday, May 30 from 1-2:30 p.m. at the Meekins Library in the Hawks-Hayden Community Room, 2 Williams St.

The celebration honors Fiscal Year 2026 cultural grant recipients. People may join local artists and political representatives to learn about cultural programs in their community.

There will be performances and presentations from FY 26 funded artists, musicians and environmentalists. Refreshments will be provided.

There will be introductory remarks by Williamsburg Select Board Member Paul Wetzel, State Senator Paul Mark and State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa.

This spring the Williamsburg Cultural Council announced the award of 28 artistic and educational grants totaling \$5,900 for cultural programs in Williamsburg and neighboring towns.

The publication of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School's literary magazine, The Viking Runestone, received a grant.

This year's grant recipients include: Anne T. Dunphy School Anne T. Dunphy Spring Musical \$400;

Bates III, Davis R. Celebrating the Season: A New England Heritage \$200;

Black, Jennifer Community Sing Alongs \$200; Burke, Theresa The Viking Runestone Volume 8 \$300;

Chesterfield Fourth of July Association, Inc. Chesterfield 4th of July Parade \$200; Collaborative for Educational Services, Inc. Creative Movement \$150; Collider Music & Food Inc. Secret Planet Presents \$200; Coombe, Louise Writing Stories into Song - workshop and performance \$200; Cummington Village Church Friday Night Cafe \$300; DeRoy, Luke Red Loves Blue \$200; Emmer, Matthew Matt Emmer & Friends Concert \$200; Hampshire Music Boosters 2026 Spring Musical \$400; Hersey, Lisa Stitched Journals \$150; Hilltown Theatre Anonymous Hilltown Theatre Anonymous 2026: The Winter's Tale \$200; and Hilltown Village, Inc. Wiggles and Giggles Music Class \$200.

Other grant awards include: Hollingsworth, Rebecca Community Contra/Barn Dance \$200; Hoyt Dawson, Miana 2026 Season Celebration of Artisans, Farms and Producers \$200; Leader, Rachel KlezCummington \$200; Leue, Helene Community Square Dance \$200; Major Jameson, Alexis Dances in the Orchard at Meekins Library \$200; Malkin, Roslyn "Craving a Little Peace and Joy in Your Life?" \$200; Maynard, Llama Stars Above Williamsburg \$200; Meekins Library Alchemy Laboratory \$150;

Plainfield Congregational Church Plainfield Concerts at 7 \$200; Polovic, Natasa Community Yoga with Natasa \$200; Tamarack Hollow Nature and Cultural Center, Inc. Explore the Fauna and Flora of the Chesterfield Gorge \$150; Timmons, Edward The History of American Popular Music and How it has Helped to Connect our Multicultural Society \$150 and Tupper, Lara How to Face Writer's Block \$150.

Educational programs include writing and song-writing workshops, a nature hike, and a presentation on the history of American music. Participatory dances of several genres received grants, such as creative dance, contra dance, square dance, and Dances in the Orchard at the Meekins Library. Annual community events such as the Chesterfield July 4 parade and the Hilltown Theatre Anonymous Shakespeare play also received funding.

Musical events receiving grants include KlezCummington, Plainfield Concerts at 7, Community Sing Alongs, and singer-songwriter concerts.

The Williamsburg Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community.

Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of municipally appointed volunteers. The members of the Williamsburg Cultural Council are: Rob Longley, Chairperson, Lauri Munroe-Hultman, Treasurer, Lesley Ham, Secretary, Alice Heller, Donna McGill, Natasa Polovic, and Tara Winters.

Statewide, more than \$5 million will be distributed by local cultural councils in 2026. Grants will support an enormous range of grassroots activities: concerts, exhibitions, radio and video productions, field trips for schoolchildren, after-school youth programs, writing workshops, historical preservation efforts, lectures, First Night celebrations, nature and science education programs for families and town festivals. Nearly half of LCC funds support educational activities for young people.

The Williamsburg Cultural Council will seek applications again in the fall. For guidelines and complete information on the Williamsburg Cultural Council, people may email the Council at burgyc@gmail.com. Applications and more information about the Local Cultural Council Program are available by visiting www.massculturalcouncil.org.

CHESTER



Gateway Regional School's marching band consisted of students from grades 7 - 12, under the direction of Beth Guertin in the Chester on Track parade on Saturday, May 16.

CHESTER ON TRACK CELEBRATES 35 YEARS



Station master Dave Pierce was, of course, on hand during Chester on Track.



Dinosaurs led a contingent from the Hamilton Memorial Library in Chester.



The Littleville Fair in Chester had their own train filled with kids and chaperones in the parade, sponsored by Down to Earth Excavating. Turley Publications by Wendy Long

LENOX

Lenox Farmers Market returns on Fridays

LENOX –The Lenox Chamber of Commerce announces the return of the Lenox Farmers Market for the 2026 summer season beginning Friday, May 22 through Sept, 11 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at St. Ann's Church, 134 Main St.

The market offers a weekly gathering of fresh, local goods and community connection. A staple of

the Berkshires, the Lenox Farmers Market features 19 full-season vendors, along with a rotating selection of guest vendors throughout the season. Visitors can enjoy a wide variety of offerings, including locally grown produce, farm products, fresh-baked breads and pastries, prepared foods, and specialty items such as maple products, preserves

and craft beverages. In addition to food, the market showcases local artisans and makers, offering handcrafted goods such as pottery, woodcraft, textiles, and homewares, as well as wellness products including natural soaps and body care. Shoppers will also find plants and flowers, along with community organizations sharing information

and resources. Each week, the market is enhanced with live local music, creating a joyful and welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. The Lenox Farmers Market is open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to come early for the best selection and stay to enjoy the music and community atmosphere.

LEE

Chamber holds closing reception

LEE – The Lee Chamber of Commerce holds a closing reception for the Jacob's Pillow exhibit on Monday, June 2 from 4:30-5:45 in the Lee Library, 100 Main St. The exhibit features marketing, tourism and business relations. Light refreshments will be served.

Baseball in Berkshires Museum open

LEE – Berkshire County's newest museum is now open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in the Lee Premium Outlets. Baseball in the Berkshires Museum is in Suite B 55 between Lindt Chocolate and Johnson Murphy. The present exhibit is titled "The Fascinating Story of Baseball in the Berkshires." This is a multi-media

exhibit featuring stories that tell about the rich history of baseball in the Berkshires. Artifacts related to important dates, landmarks, events, teams or persons are displayed throughout the exhibit. People will find interesting stories about many of the local "heroes" as well as some about baseball legends and their connection to the Berkshires. Visitors of all ages are

drawn into this exhibit not only by the subject matter but its interest to people of all walks of life. Young visitors are attracted to the interactive children's display where they are able to touch, feel, compare and try-on the artifacts. Reading stations for the younger generation or the young at heart are created to share a story, baseball memory or a picture book.

Country Journal

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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