

Country Journal

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A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

June 11, 2026 | Vol. 48, No. 7 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

BLANDFORD

Board meets prior to meeting

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Prior to the Annual Town Meeting on June 1, the Select Board met with Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo, Town Counsel Mark Reich of KP-Law and Moderator David Hopson to review the meeting warrant articles.

This is done prior to every town meeting. The board then acknowledged the resignation of Edna Wilander from the Planning Board as Vice Chair and thanked her for her many years of service in that capacity.

Appointments

Then the board continued with appointments as follows: Kim Bergland to the Zoning Board of Appeals for the term July 01, 2026, through June 30, 2029; the following appointments are for one year: Douglas Emo as Watson Park Groundskeeper; Joseph Henning as Blandford's Veteran's Agent; Cristina Ferrera as Town Administrator; Jennifer Girard to Risk Management; Aaron Poteat as Plumbing and Gas Inspector and Adam Dolby to Hazardous Waste.

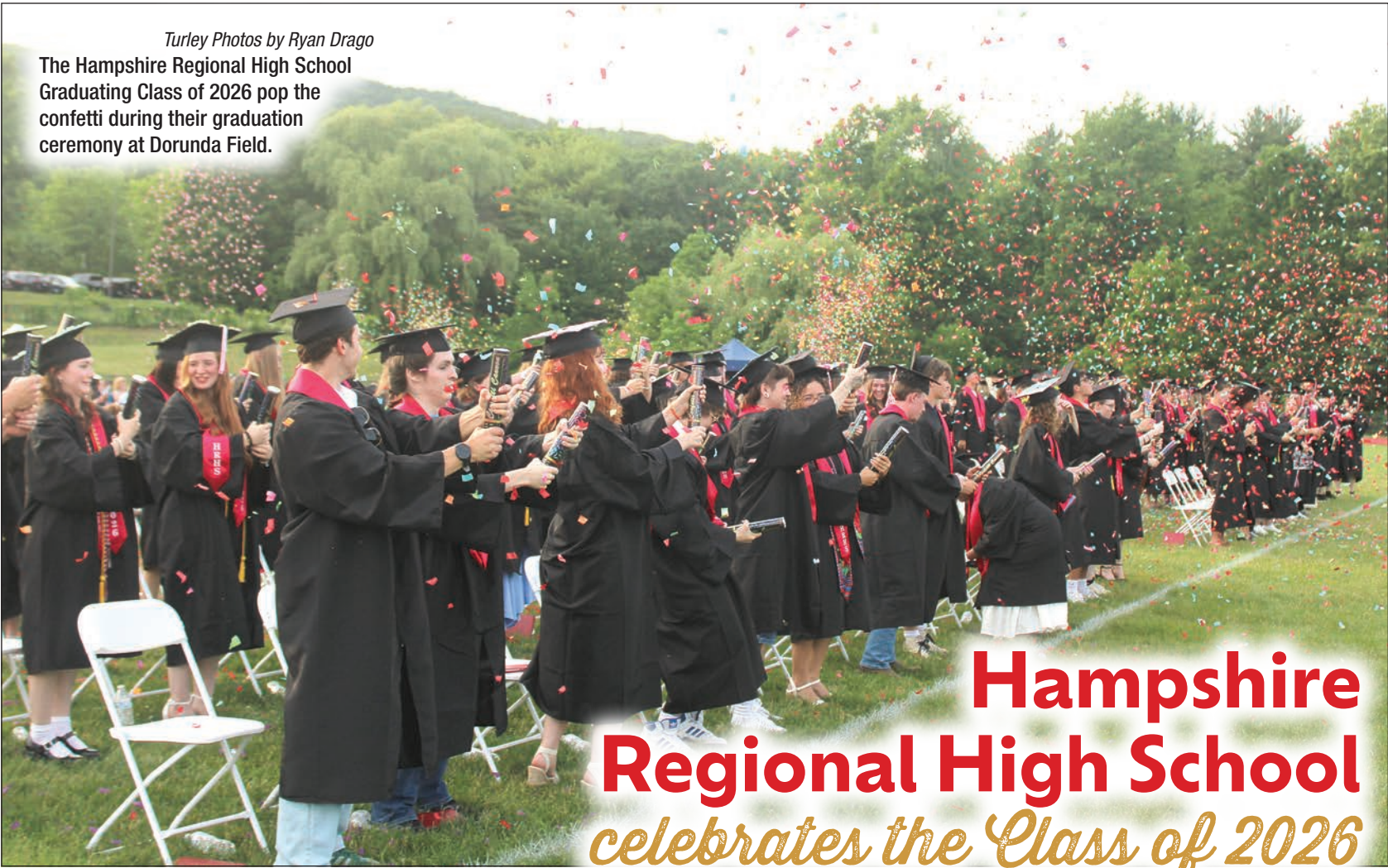
Senior tax work off

The board then reviewed basic job descriptions for the Senior Tax Work-off program from the Council on Aging and the Town Clerk's office.

The COA has the need for someone to do light dusting, maintaining books outside the COA room, organizing the resource brochures available in the hallway and help with the community garden.

The Town Clerk needs

MEETING, page 6



Turley Photos by Ryan Drago
The Hampshire Regional High School Graduating Class of 2026 pop the confetti during their graduation ceremony at Dorunda Field.

Hampshire Regional High School celebrates the Class of 2026

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer

This past week was the 54th Commencement for Hampshire Regional High School as they celebrate the Class of 2026.

The ceremony was held outside on Dorunda Field

as family members, friends, and school staff await the arrival of 95 graduating seniors. Hampshire Regional High School features students from several towns, including Westhampton, Southampton, Williamsburg, Goshen, and Chesterfield.

The ceremony began

with all 95 seniors making the proud walk from the school entrance to Dorunda Field. The National Anthem was performed by the Chamber Singers, with Aidan Linden serving as the Director.

The opening greeting was given by Rachel

O'Connell, Class of 2026 Vice President. O'Connell thanked all the teachers and families for being at the ceremony and reminded her fellow graduates, "don't forget where you come from."

Class Secretary Eleanor Cleary talked about moments that defined their

school. Over the years, students have grown and changed.

Salutatorian Corinne Somes of Chesterfield got to speak as well during the ceremony. Somes will be attending Wellesley College.

CLASS OF 2026, page 9

HUNTINGTON

New firetruck vote falls short

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

A proposal to purchase a \$1.2 million new fire truck for the town of Huntington failed to make the two-thirds majority required for a debt exclusion.

Sixty of the 105 registered voters casting paper votes at Huntington's

Annual Town Meeting on June 1 voted to support the purchase; the remaining 45 were opposed. The proposal passed its first test with a simple majority vote as a ballot question at the annual town election on May 9, with a vote of 104 to 94. Both the election and town meeting votes are required for a debt exclusion.

Passing a debt exclu-

sion means allowing the town to borrow funds to pay a big bill over time, with interest, and having those payments be beyond the limitations of Proposition 2-1/2, which caps tax revenue increases at 2-1/2% each year.

Fire Chief Josh Ellinger told the voters

VOTE, page 2

HUNTINGTON

Select Board hears complaint overdue police road detail wages

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Police Chief Brian Kowal met with the Huntington Select Board at their June 3 meeting in Stanton Hall to report that wages owed to two of the town's police officers have not been paid.

Officer Todd Michon and Deputy Chief Robert Garriepy worked police details to support the Basket Street water main project from October through December 2025. Invoices totaling \$32,706.22 for these details and the patrol car were issued to the contractor Western Earthworks and have yet to be paid.

In a memo to the Select Board, Kowal wrote that the two men experienced delays in payment for their work far beyond a reasonable time frame. At the meeting, he said that he'd been told by Western Earthworks the men would be paid once the town pays that company. In the meantime, the town is waiting for the funding back from the

state under an expense-reimbursement contract. Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin said that EPA has approved the cost and the paperwork is now with the DEP.

The group discussed using the revolving account set up for this project to pay Michon and Garriepy, while they wait for payment from Western Earthworks. While the town does have enough funding to pay the two in the meantime, the revolving account itself is empty. "We've been paying things out as quickly as the money comes in," Peloquin said.

Chairman Roger Booth said that a memo had recently come across his desk from the state, advising contractors that they need to pay their subcontractors first. He will forward that to Peloquin.

In the meantime, the board moved and unanimously approved consulting with legal counsel about how to have the town pay the police-

BOARD, page 3

BLANDFORD



Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm
Candidates for election June 13: from the left are, Library Trustee incumbent Byam Stevens, School Committee, Katherine McDonough and Select Board incumbent Cara Letendre, Bradley Curry and Corinne Shartrand.

Meet the Candidates Night helps voters make decision

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Meet the Candidates Night organizer George Reichert introduced the purpose behind the evening and a summary of how the event came to be.

"Here we are tonight

with a number of candidates for positions. They will speak for five minutes, and then questions will be directed to them," he said.

Reichert told the audience that each question was to be written on a four-by-six file card available at either end of each row. Questions

could be directed to a candidate or all the candidates; no questions would be asked unless they were signed by the person asking the question.

He introduced the moderator for the evening, Robert Gazda, former principal at Gateway Regional

High School, faculty member at Westfield State University, now retired and holder of multiple degrees. Gazda is not a Blandford resident.

Attending were three candidates for Select Board:

CANDIDATES, page 6

Meet the Graduates

PAGE 8, 9

Becket.....	7	Goshen.....	5	Public Notices.....	11
Blandford.....	6	Haydenville.....	5	Sandisfield.....	7
Chester.....	7	Huntington.....	2, 3	Washington.....	11
Classifieds.....	12	Northampton.....	11	Westhampton.....	7
Cummington.....	5	Obituary.....	13	Williamsburg.....	3
Easthampton.....	5	Opinion.....	4	Worthington.....	5



HUNTINGTON

Historian John Garvey talks on ‘Losing Murrayfield’ at HPL

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

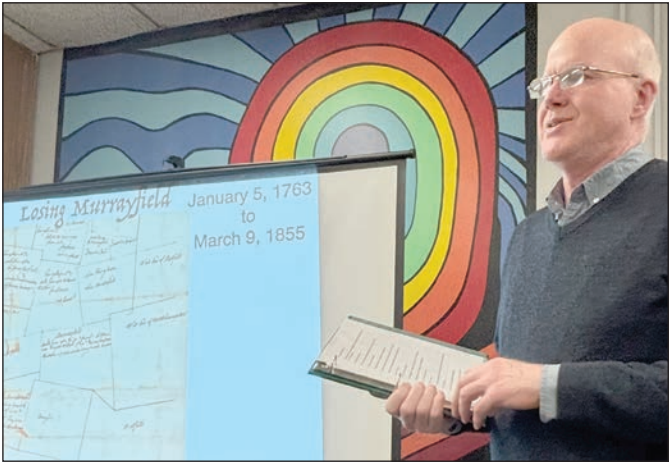
HUNTINGTON – Local historian John Garvey, formerly of Chester, gave a well-attended talk called “Losing Murrayfield” at the Huntington Public Library on Saturday, May 30.

While a member of the Chester Historical Society, Garvey traced the history of the region from Jan. 5, 1763 to March 9, 1855, which marked the official start and end of a settlement called “Murrayfield,” encompassing all of present-day Chester and Huntington, and pieces of the current towns of Montgomery, Russell, Middlefield and Westhampton.

His research was launched from the book, “The History of the Town of Murrayfield” by Alfred Minot Copeland, published in 1892 by C. W. Bryon & Co. in Springfield.

Garvey noted that Huntington’s former Murrayfield Elementary School was the last place in the area to hold that name, which the school carried for 110 years after the town ceased.

Western Massachusetts had already begun settling along the Westfield river and a large portion of modern



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long
Local historian John Garvey gave a talk called “Losing Murrayfield” at the Huntington Public Library on Saturday, May 20.

Huntington was part of a land grant bestowed upon David Ingersoll in 1736, as a reward for bringing Christianity to Native Americans in Stockbridge.

Another early figure was John Kirtland from Norwich, Connecticut, who bought a large parcel of land that became known as Norwich, a name still honored by Norwich Lake, Norwich Bridge and the Norwich Church in Huntington.

But much of the area was still unclaimed. And not worth as much money because of the difficulty in managing the hills and waterways. Seeking revenue, the Commonwealth gathered

unincorporated lands into 10 townships to sell.

On June 2, 1762 the area to be called Murrayfield was auctioned to four men living in Worcester County, who saw it as an investment. They divided their region into 100 acre lots and gave 52 of them to vetted settlers, who each agreed to clear seven acres for pasture, build a house that met required minimal dimensions and move in.

The region also had to build a meeting house and hire a minister, to be paid for by state funds. The church of the day was called the Orthodox Church, which later became the Congregational Church. The investors hoped

to make their money by selling the last 48 lots once a community was in place.

The 52 settlers drew lots from those earmarked around the current Skyline Trail, and lot 18 was designated for the church (now the site of the First Congregational Church), cemetery and school house.

The goal was to attract people to create sawmills and gristmills and a doctor to support the necessary infrastructure for the region. Controversy soon developed between those residents down along the river and those up on the current Chester Hill.

Getting to church on Sunday, and to town meetings in that same building, wasn’t required but it was an expectation. The church on Skyline Trail was difficult for the flatlanders to get to, especially if they had to cross rivers to do so.

For a time, they agreed on holding two thirds of the services on Chester Hill and the third at Isaac Mixers Tavern located in the Ingersoll area. This worked for a few years, until Reverend Bascom refused to hold services at the Tavern, causing the “river people” to refuse to pay their taxes to support Bascom’s salary.

This led to the four investors from Worcester deciding to divide their area

into two towns in order to keep the peace. What emerged began to look like present-day Huntington.

Over time, the settlers would appeal to the General Court (state legislature) to break off into more geographically advantageous communities.

Following several appeals that were denied, a group wanting to join Norwich was approved around 1778. In 1783, other corners of the region broke off into Becket and Worthington. By 1791, part of Norwich was annexed to add more land to Montgomery, which had formed in 1780; another section seceded to Chesterfield to eliminate having to ford two rivers to get to Norwich.

A 60-year period of stability ensued but everything changed when the Western Railroad arrived in 1841. The current downtown Huntington was at that time called Chester Center; modern downtown Chester was called the Chester Factories.

Both wanted to be the pre-emptive village and train stop in the area; to achieve this, Chester Village wanted to align itself with Norwich. Chester Factories opposed the move because of the loss of the West Branch of the Westfield River and its relat-

ed factories.

Even Norwich opposed the scheme, leading the legislature to not give the scheme a single vote. But Chester Village was not done.

They hired Charles Phelps Huntington from Northampton in 1853 as their attorney and with a few geographical changes, the new and final border change was passed. In 1855, the town petitioned to have his name changed to Huntington, which was also approved.

The four investors did not fare as well. All four were originally loyal to the Crown, with one convinced by an angry mob to support the Revolution. Two moved to Boston and went onto Canada when Henry Knox’s “Train of Artillery” forced the evacuation of loyalists from Boston. These proprietors had also failed to keep their end of the bargain to build roads and bridges in Murrayfield.

For their role against the Continental Army in the American Revolution, their remaining property was confiscated, assigned an agent to sell and the money went to the Commonwealth.

Garvey’s presentation showed the border changes in the maps over time as each of these actions took place. It was a remarkable and engaging presentation.

from page 1

VOTE

the National Fire Academy recommends replacing a firetruck every 25 years. The engine he proposed replacing is a 1996 engine with 27,000 miles on it.

“Another truck we replaced had 15,000 miles on it, but was failing to pass the pump test,” Ellinger said, adding that these trucks carry a heavy load. Without additional fire equipment, carrying 1,000 gallons of water alone yields a weight of 8,340 pounds.

Ellinger obtained a number of estimates from companies that might bid, ranging from \$650,000 to \$1.2 million.

Speaking for the committee, Finance Committee Chair Eric Jensen said they agreed with purchasing a new fire engine, but recommended it not exceed \$850,000.

“This is a 5-year loan and we will be needing to purchase other capital items in that period, including a new highway department vehicle in a couple of years,” Jensen said.

Several previous loans had been paid off in Fiscal Year 2026 and the town planned on rolling a new item into the FY 27 budget. But that amount was not offered by anyone as a friendly amendment to the original motion.

Town resident Karin Vorwerk said, “I don’t like higher taxes. But I don’t like houses burning down even more. It has happened here.

We have many old houses. I would defer to the expertise of the fire department.”

The question was moved and the secret ballot process began with four election workers in place to do the count.

The following day, Ellinger released a statement saying, “We respect the vote of Town Meeting and appreciate everyone who took the time to participate in the process.”

“While the outcome is disappointing, I am thankful to the residents who came out in support of the Fire Department and understood the need to begin planning for the replacement of a 30-year-old frontline fire engine, he said.

“We will continue to evaluate our equipment, work with Town officials and look for ways to ensure we can provide reliable emergency services to the residents of Huntington,” said Ellinger.

On Wednesday, June 3 the Huntington Select Board met and discussed the matter. Chairman Roger Booth stated that he believed the Fire Department would come back again for another vote.

He explained that the majority vote from the May election will remain valid until Dec. 31, 2026 or until such time as the tax rate has been set.

He said he advised Ellinger a Special Town Meeting to revote the matter had to take place before the end of September to



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long
Huntington voters cast paper ballots to determine whether or not the town could use a debt exclusion to purchase a \$1.2 million fire truck. Although the majority supported this, the motion failed to meet the two-thirds approval required.

leave enough time for the tax rate to be set. A warrant article had to be written up, approved by legal counsel and posted for two weeks before a special town meeting can occur.

Early on June 1, the town held a Special Town Meeting to approve end-of-year transfers from free cash needed to balance the books.

Voters approved all four measures totaling \$64,100, as follows: \$10,000 for Highway Equipment Maintenance; \$39,000 for Highway Sand and Salt; \$5,100 for Highway Snow/

Ice Labor; and \$10,000 for Basket St. Landfill Monitoring. The motion passed with two opposed.

The Annual Town Meeting opened at 7 p.m. with a tribute and gifts to former Highway Superintendent Chipper Dazelle and retired Police Chief Robert Garrippy; this year’s Annual Town Report was dedicated to them.

Moderator George Peterson read through the line item budget, with voters only issuing a few holds, all of which ultimately passed. A total town budget

of \$7,005,252 unanimously passed the final vote.

Several warrant articles involved additional transfers from free cash: \$20,000 to supplement last year’s appropriation for the re-painting of North Hall; \$16,000 for a diesel and gas-

oline metering system and \$6,000 for a secure chain link fenced area in the basement of town hall to secure town record all passed unanimously among those who voted. A small number of people did not vote in favor, in opposition, nor abstain.

A warrant article to fund a new police department cruiser passed with \$53,000 transferred from Capital Equipment Stabilization Account; \$20,000 from the police detail fees account and \$10,000 from Free Cash for a total of \$83,000 to replace the department’s 2018 Ford Explorer.

The last two warrant articles also passed. The first one updated town bylaws to allow the Fire Chief and his designees to enforce all laws and regulations related to fire safety.

According to Ellinger, the state fire code changed in the 1980s that now allows towns to charge fines for people violating the state fire code such as burning out-of-season. This motion carried with eight opposed.

A final transfer from free cash of \$8,685 for FY’26 fire hourly wages was also approved.

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PINK LADY

A photograph of a pink lady orchid growing in a field. The orchid has a large, green, heart-shaped leaf and a long, thin stem with a single pink flower. The ground is covered with dry leaves and pine needles.

Turley Publications photo by Deborah Daniels

Lady slippers are wild orchids, which grow in damp woodlands and wetland relying on highly specific soil fungi for their seeds to germinate.

HUNTINGTON

Rapids restaurant clears first of many hurdles toward reopening

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Huntington Select Board held a public hearing in Stanton Hall on Wednesday, June 3 at 5 p.m. to hear from residents about the proposed transfer of an “All Alcoholic Beverages Section 12 Restaurant License” to Holly and Colin Neylon of Montgomery for “The Rapids,” a former restaurant at 200 Worthington Rd. in Huntington.

About a dozen people attended the hearing and several were there to speak in support of the restaurant, located on Route 112 along the East Branch of the Westfield River, reopening.

The Neylons already own The Maple Leaf bar and restaurant on Arnold Street in Westfield. Attending with them was Tom Ray, Jr., formerly of Huntington, who manages the Maple Leaf.

Holly told the board that their intent is to reopen as a full restaurant and bar. They are working with an archi-

tect and their plans include increasing the size of the kitchen, eliminating the banquet room and moving the bar over to that side of the restaurant. New bathrooms will also be constructed.

Chairman Roger Booth explained that the project does not yet have approval nor conditions set by the Zoning Board of Appeals; that hearing is scheduled for Monday, June 29 at 6 p.m.

But Huntington currently has an extra liquor license and he felt the Select Board could move forward with their part.

Karon Hathaway, Chair of the ZBA said that the planning board had reviewed the special permit application the previous evening and found it to be complete.

Huntington resident Jim O’Connor lives diagonally north of the restaurant. “It might surprise you, but I’m here to support you,” he said. He had been to the Maple Leaf and found it to be well run with good food. “They run a nice place,” O’Connor said.



Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long
Maple Leaf Restaurant Manager Tom Ray, Jr., from left, and prospective owners Holly and Colin Neylon answered questions at a public hearing held at Stanton Hall on Wednesday, June 3 to transfer the alcohol liquor license from the Rapids Restaurant to the proposed River House Bar and Grill. This is the first of a number of steps the team will take before they are able to purchase, renovate and reopen the popular restaurant.

Peg Dragon, also of Huntington, attended and said she’d like the restaurant open as soon as possible, saying that it had been closed for too long.

Booth asked if the Neylons had seen the restrictions on the previous permit, which included no food or alcohol served downstairs and a strict adherence to

parking limitations. “Parking is the concern,” Booth emphasized. “Mass DOT was a big issue for Listons in Worthington because of parking. This restaurant’s location is complicated by the line of sight from Route 66 where it meets Route 112. There also can be no parking on the island between the parking area and road.

The Neylons responded that they are working with an architect who will advise them on the number of available spaces on the property. They plan to pave and line the parking lot to do this, and said they would ask any patrons parking illegally to leave.

Holly added that they had similar challenges over parking when they first opened the Maple Leaf. They explained that the restaurant’s capacity will be tied to the parking availability.

Karon Hathaway said that the ZBA would provide special permit approval with stipulations around parking. If the permit is granted at the June 29 meeting, there is a

20-day waiting period afterwards.

The next day, Holly Neylon said that she was pleased with clearing the first of many steps that lie ahead before the restaurant reopens. Those steps include obtaining the liquor license, several public hearings, a state investigation and CORI checks and probably a site visit due to the change in the restaurant’s layout. But she was pleased to see supporters at the first hearing.

“It was heartwarming to hear that somebody supports the Maple Leaf but was also in favor of this,” she said. “You couldn’t walk away from that without feeling positive.”

Neylon said that they will close on the purchase once the liquor license is in hand, required as collateral by the bank. Once they close, they will set up a social media presence to keep the public informed as to progress and anticipated opening.

The new restaurant will be called The River House Bar and Grill, she said.

BOARD

men for their work. They also approved holding an emergency session to move that payment forward once they know. Booth will be away for several weeks, but selectmen John McVeigh and Bill Hathaway will cover this. If it occurs after July 1, the new selectman Robert Drabiuk, who was also in attendance, will approve that with McVeigh.

Officer Todd Michon is owed \$23,400 for that work. Deputy Chief Robert Garriepy is due \$1,005. The Huntington Police

Department is also owed \$8,301.22 for the use of the cruiser on that police detail. Cruiser charges go into a special account that is drawn upon for vehicle replacement.

COA
In other business, Council on Aging Chair Kathleen Peterson asked that the board approve Karon Hathaway as an alternate board member and Sharon Heath to be hired as the clerical aide.

After discussion, the board unanimously

approved both appointments, with Heath to begin work immediately at the rate of \$21 per hour. After three months of satisfactory work, that rate would go up to \$22 per hour. Selectman Bill Hathaway was out of the room for that discussion to avoid conflict of interest.

Retreat center
A discussion took place regarding the tax status of the Timothy Hill retreat center at Norwich Lake. The group had asked for a continuance once the assessors determined they did

not have a proper non-profit status. The assessors granted that continuance, but have been asked to extend it. The Board will send a letter that all taxpayers must submit all required paperwork under Mass. General Law and that there are to be no further extensions beyond those designated by law.

Select Board
Administrative Assistant
The Board also approved Pelouquin’s proposal to internally post a part-time Select Board

Administrative Assistant position. If this is filled by a current part-time employee, it makes them eligible for health insurance. However, an Assistant Town Clerk position will not be filled until later this year yielding some savings to help cover the cost if the employee elects it. The health insurance cost should also be shared between the Select Board and whatever department this person already works in.

Other business
Town Accountant

Richard Buley is retiring and the town is looking at options to cover this work.

They also looked at expenses related to fire extinguisher and smoke/CO2 detector maintenance issues.

Heating oil tanks were topped off at the fire station, Stanton Hall, and highway department as the fuel rate is still favorable until June 30. Pelouquin will also check with the library.

The Water and Sewer Department is looking at water usage at Pettis Field.

from page 1

WILLIAMSBURG

Thom Haxo exhibits personal drawings at Meekins Library

WILLIAMSBURG – An exhibition of Thom Haxo drawings created from the heart specifically for his family in Crayola crayons for special holidays and events has become a tradition.

The works involve the immediate family, dog, bunnies, cats, as well as a familiar mouse. These works were not designed for art gallery viewing, but are shown in this setting as a gift from the Haxo family to the viewers at the Neil Hammer Gallery at the Meekins Library in Williamsburg.

Thom Haxo says “I have

developed a great love for working with crayons and their unique effect of developing richness and variation in color through waxed layers. It is unfortunate that, as other materials such as markers, colored pencils, and digital software become more accessible to children, crayons have been mostly designated to the elementary school years of childhood.

During the many years of working on the series, I discovered that crayons are a very valid material to be considered by all ages interested in making art. These works were done with a light

touch of celebration, but serious dedication and love to my family.”

There will be an artist reception on Friday, June 19 from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Specializing in figure sculpture and drawing, puppetry, computer modeling and animation, Thom Haxo is an imaginative artist and associate art professor emeritus at Hampshire College.

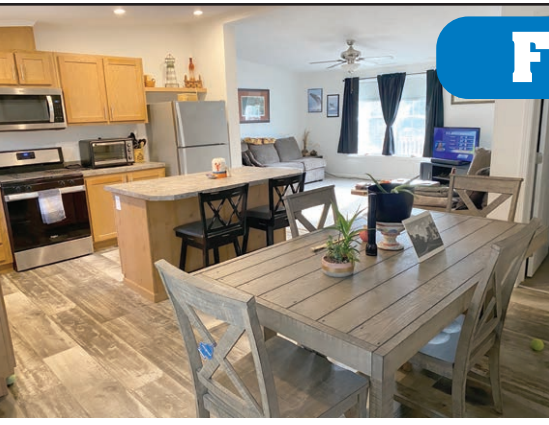
Haxo received a B.F.A. from Pratt Institute and an M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. He lives in Haydenville, with his wife, Anne and his cats, Mimi and Moose.

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GUEST COLUMN

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor



Why can't I get a lump sum death benefit from my wife?

Dear Rusty:
My wife passed away in September 2025 at age 64. We had been married for 43 years and started collecting benefits when I turned 62 and she was 63. She did not have enough work credits to claim her own SS and thus collected on my record. SSA told me that I was not entitled to receive the lousy \$255 death benefit because my wife was collecting on my work record. Is this correct?

Signed: Grieving Widower

Dear Grieving:
We extend our sincere condolences on your wife's passing.

But I must tell you that what the Social Security Administration told you is correct.

Although we often see assertions that the so-called "one-time lump sum death benefit" is always paid, there are specific rules for when that admittedly small SS benefit is available. And there are also specific rules regarding who is eligible to receive it.

Essentially, the lump sum death benefit is paid when the deceased person was collecting Social Security retirement benefits or at least entitled to SS retirement benefits. And that one-time lump sum death benefit usually goes to the deceased person's surviving spouse, more on that later.

But for the death benefit to be paid, the deceased person must have been collecting Social Security retirement benefits or was at least entitled to SS retirement benefits.

In your specific case, because your wife was not eligible for her own SS retirement benefit and was, instead, just collecting a spousal benefit from your SS record, you unfortunately are not able to collect the lump-sum death benefit as your wife's surviving spouse. So, what you were told by Social Security about this special survivor benefit is, indeed, correct.

For information, here is a bit more on who can collect the SS death bene-

fit: the one-time lump sum death benefit is normally paid to the eligible surviving spouse of a deceased person, who was collecting Social Security.

But if there is no surviving spouse to receive the onetime payment, the death benefit may be paid to someone else who was also a dependent of the deceased. That might be a minor surviving child or a surviving adult disabled child, who was collecting dependent benefits from the deceased person's SS record. In rare cases, a dependent parent may be paid if no other surviving dependents are eligible. FYI, ex-spouses are not eligible for a death benefit from a former spouse.

The lump-sum death benefit must be applied for by contacting Social Security and the benefit must be claimed within two years of the person's death. You will need to verify your identity and confirm your eligibility for this survivor benefit and you will need to provide other information about the deceased also including a death certificate.

There is an SSA form to apply for the lump sum death benefit (SSA-8), but calling your local SS office or 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for the one-time lump-sum death benefit in person is usually all that is needed.

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

CHECK OUT ALL THE

Turley

Publications

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Southern Hilltown Domestic Task Force defines consent

In recognition of the upcoming school summer vacation, the Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force is dedicating time to raising awareness around consent and have some suggestions for how to talk to your children about this issue.

Key aspects of consent include it being freely given without pressure. It is reversible, anyone can change their mind at any time.

It is informed with both partners knowing exactly what they are agreeing to. It involves an enthusiastic and clear "yes" and specifically, agreeing to one act (like kissing) does not mean con-

sent to another (like intercourse).

Without all these aspects, consent is not present. Consent is expressed with words or actions that are not ambiguous. It is a clear "yes" rather than the absence of "no."

It is coercion-free, meaning it must be given freely and willingly; consent is not present if someone is pressured, manipulated, coerced or threatened. Everyone involved must be fully conscious and able to make informed decisions.

If a person is asleep, unconscious, or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, they cannot give consent and it is

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

Foxgloves take the stage in June

I came around the corner of the house and to my surprise, the purple foxglove was in flower! Yippee!

This is just the start of a wonderful sequence of blooms lasting the rest of the month and then some. Read on, straight from the archives to learn more about these unique plants.

Those of us who favor romantic, old-fashioned flowers have likely devoted some space in our gardens to the common purple foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) or one of its cultivars. This is for good reason, as there are few plants more breathtaking than a foxglove in full bloom. Imagine three to five-foot tall spires of uniquely marked bell-shaped flowers in shades of white, pink, and rose.

One well-grown plant may yield five or more stalks! Group several plants together for a show stopping display come the end of June.

Native to western Europe, the common foxglove has had a place in North American gardens since its introduction during colonial times.

There has always been a mysterious side to foxgloves, due in part to an unusual name and the potent medicine that is obtained from the plant.

Legend has it that foxglove was derived from "folk's glove," folks referring to the elves and fairies of country lore. Another legend tells that the fox needed magical gloves to steal a chicken or two.

A less fanciful explanation traces glove to gleow in Old English; a gleow was an ancient musical instrument made of bells suspended from a curved frame.

In 1785 William Withering, an English physician, published a decade's worth of studies devoted to



placement of florets horizontally around the five-foot stem makes viewing the unique inner markings of the flowers especially easy.

There are other more subtle species of foxglove worthy of placement in your garden.

One of my favorites is the Rusty Foxglove (*Digitalis ferruginea*). Small flowers the color of liquid gold bloom up three to six-foot stems late in the summer.

Although touted as being a biennial this species has returned for several years in my part shade, moisture retentive location.

The yellow foxglove is a reliable perennial, shorter than most, only 24-30 inches tall and blooming a soft yellow in early June. This species also prefers part shade and adequate moisture.

The Grecian foxglove, a true biennial, has grayish flowers, blooming in July up three-foot stems.

The straw foxglove is relatively new to my garden, blooming happily for the first time last summer. It is the most diminutive flower-wise of any mentioned thus far and it tops off about two and a half feet tall.

Whether you plant the common foxglove for a show stopping display or settle on one of its more subtle cousins, do give these old-fashioned beauties a place in your garden.

J.L. Hudson, Seedsman, of Star Route 2, Box 337, La Honda CA, 94020 offers an extensive collection of foxglove seed for sale. Send along \$1 for a very interesting catalog.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

Country Journal

We Want to Hear From You

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



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24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

Turley
Publications, Inc.
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ISSN NO. 0747-2471

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

Mail letter to Country Journal, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or mail your letter to: countryjournal@turley.com.

ELECTION LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to countryjournal@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Friday to be considered for the following Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers. Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Country Journal.

someone seems unsure, stays silent, doesn't respond, or says "maybe," they aren't saying yes."

As always, thank you for all you do to make hilltown children safe.

Phil Barry
Kim Savery
Stephanie Conway
Lindsey Maxwell
Mary Kroll
Mark Ames
Victoria Arbuckle
Melissa Reid
Heather Roy
Jalene Tremble
Rachel Maiore
Donna Larocque
Members of the Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force

makes sense to them or how they would define consent.

Encouraging your child to speak up: This will remind them that they have the right to say "no" or "stop" if something doesn't feel right, even to friends, family and adults. Normalizing Open Dialogue so that your child feels comfortable coming to you with questions, ensuring they know they will be believed and supported.

LoveIsRespect.org reminds us that "Consent means communicating every step of the way. Don't just assume your partner is comfortable with actions. It requires a clear and enthusiastic "yes" meaning if

a continuous, ongoing conversation rather than a one-time "yes." Consent for one act does not imply consent for another and it can be withdrawn at any time.

Some suggestions to begin or continue conversations about respect and boundaries at home include Asking for Permission: Try modeling consent by asking your child for permission before hugging, tickling, or touching them, and allow them to say "no."

Defining Consent: Explain that consent means checking in with others to make sure everyone is comfortable with what is happening and ask your child if that

GOSHEN

Goshen Town Clerk lists election results

GOSHEN – The Town Clerk announced the June 6 Annual Town Election results.

Two hundred nineteen of the 795 registered voters cast ballots for a voter turnout of 28%.

There was one contest on the ballot.

Shelby A. Howland won a three year term on Finance Committee with 122 votes over Dawn M. Scaparotti with 81 votes.

All other candidates ran unopposed. Some positions had no candidates, but vot-

ers elected write-in candidates.

Sabrina M. McGill won a three year term as Almoner. Joshua E. LaFond won a three year term to the Board of Health with 178 votes.

Sabrina M. McGill won a three year term to Fiance Committee with 170 votes. Rosemary W. Bienz won a three year term as Library Trustee with 174 votes and Jane C. McGrath won a three-year term as Library Trustee with 182 votes.

Also on the ballot were

a two and one year terms as Library Trustee. Donna S. Kolodziej won the two year term as Library Trustee with 179 votes and Cathy D. Evans won the one year Library Trustee with 173.

Also winning positions on the ballot were Robert D. Raymond with 156 voters to a five year term to Planning Board. Roger A. Culver with 176 votes, Robert O. Goss with 184 votes and Richard K. Polwrek with 183 votes all won one year terms to Tilton Fruit Farm Supervisor.

Keith Wright won a three year term to Select Board with 149 write in votes. Charles Amo received 37 write in votes for Select Board.

Paul Marcinek won a three year term to Hampshire Regional School Committee with 18 write in votes. Heather Crocker Aulenback won a three year term to Chesterfield/Goshen Regional School Committee with 25 write in votes.

John Otis won a three year term as Assessor with two votes.

WORTHINGTON

COA lists lunch menu

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Council on Aging and Highland Valley services will hold a luncheon on Thursday, June 18 from noon-1 p.m at Town Hall.

The menu will be barbecue chicken or chicken cordon bleu (contains dairy and gluten) with collard greens, roasted potatoes, Coleslaw and strawberry shortcake (contains dairy and gluten.) A sugar free option is available.

To reserve a meal, people should call or text 413-238-1999 by Sunday, June 14 at noon and give a name,

number of meals, the name of the person also receiving the meal and their meal choice.

New enrollee forms can be downloaded here and are also available at the Town Hall bulletin Board and the COA bulletin board at Corners Grocery. People can also fill one out when they come to pick up.

They should bring a bag with them to carry their meals to the car.

If they have any questions, they may call Phyllis Dassatti 238-5962 or email The Worthington COA.

HAYDENVILLE

Church holds artisan show

HAYDENVILLE – The annual Haydenville Artisan Show and Collectibles Sale will be Saturday, June 13 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, June 14 from noon-4 p.m. at the Haydenville Congregational Church, 143 Main St.

The event is rain or shine. Visitors will be able to browse the tables and tents of many talented local artisans from throughout the area.

There will be a sale of collectible items including artwork and pottery, hand-

made aprons, unique t-shirts, jewelry, house plants, gardening books and much more. There will also be food served, including chili, mac and cheese, baked goods and beverages.

The sale will benefit the Haydenville Congregational Church and Trans Relocation Support, Western Mass for trans families and individuals fleeing states with anti-trans legislation. More information can be found on the church website by visiting haydenvillechurch.org.

EASTHAMPTON

bankESB Veterans Drive runs through July 3

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB announces the launch of its annual Veterans Drive, a community-wide campaign supporting the One Call Away Veterans Support Center in Agawam..

The initiative will run now through Independence Day, inviting customers and community members to donate items and funds to help local veterans in need.

The One Call Away Veterans Support Center provides essential services

to veterans and their families including peer-to-peer support, emergency assistance and outreach programs designed to reduce veteran suicide and improve mental health and well-being.

Through this drive, bankESB aims to raise awareness and provide tangible support to those who have served our nation. Community members are encouraged to contribute by donating much-needed items such as toiletries,

household goods, and personal care items.

“Supporting veterans is a year-round priority for us at bankESB, and this drive is one way we can make a real difference in the lives of local heroes,” said Matthew Sosik, president and CEO at bankESB. “The One Call Away Veterans Support Center is doing critical work, and we’re honored to stand alongside them.”

This effort builds on bankESB’s longstanding commitment to the veter-

an community. Donations for the Veterans Drive can be made at any bankESB branch now through July 3. Requested items include gift cards for groceries, gas, and clothing, non-perishable food and toiletries.

For more information about the Veterans Drive or bankESB’s community initiatives, people may visit bankESB.com.

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

CUMMINGTON

Friday Night Cafe presents Steve Philbrick and One Part Luck

CUMMINGTON – On Friday, June 12 the Friday Night Cafe from 7-9 p.m. presents Steve Philbrick and One Part Luck.

They offer an evening of interwoven poetry, stories and songs.

Steve Philbrick said, “For 47 years I’ve been, living, loving, preaching, teaching and overreaching in the Hilltowns. I’ve committed to a small community where my heart and vision have grown larger.”

“I came here as a shepherd and have served two flocks. The farm, the church, the store where I worked for 22 years... This is what I’ve done with my life.”

“Now I’m gathering Hilltown poems and stories, some NSFW (“not suitable for worship”) to entertain and move you at the Friday Night Café, June 12th. Sounds good, but it’ll be better than that. I’ve been working with One Part Luck, two talented musical poets from the same hill, to create a special show,” he said.

The show takes place in the Vestry at the Village Church in beautiful downtown Cummington in the heart of the Cummington Cultural District.

The event is free, donations are appreciated. Snacks will be provided.

People should bring their own beverages.

Once again the cafe is brought by the friendly folks at the Village Church, who believe music can be a powerful force for building community.

Friday Night Cafe receives promotional support from the Cummington Cultural District, and is supported in part by grants from the Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale-Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor, and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

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.



CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

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.

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

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050
413-667-3196
pvaglife@gmail.com
www.pioneervalleayag.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.



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BLANDFORD

Albino squirrel spotted in town

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Joan Kana’s visiting albino squirrel is truly one-of-a-kind. They are very rare, about one in 100,000.

Massachusetts Audubon Society had merely two sentences regarding the critters. They are “not a separate species, rather these are gray squirrels with more or less pigment than normal.”

“True albinos also have pink eyes.”

The city of Olney, Illinois holds a white squirrel count annually.

According to the city’s website, “The unique white squirrels of Olney are true albinos, sporting white fur and pink eyes with crystal blue irises. Other squirrels come in many colors and shades of gray and black.”

The site also mentioned their remarkable agility and ability to scoot, scamper and turn cartwheels; all enabling them to elude predators.

Blandford has the occasional black squirrel, but never before has there been a report or reference to an encounter with an albino squirrel.

There are other white squirrels, but they have black eyes, not the pink eyes of the albinos. There



Photo by Joan Kana

Joan Kana was out in her Chester Road back yard Saturday morning at 7 a.m. when she spotted this albino squirrel. “This little critter was racing in circles, doing back flips, cartwheels and somersaults,” said Kana, adding, “darting about having the time of its life.”

is no report of siting a plain white squirrel, which is a leucistic squirrel, in town either.

Scienceinsights.org states “Albinism is a genetic condition resulting from the complete inability to produce melanin, the pigment responsible for coloring the skin, fur, and eyes. This is caused by a recessive gene mutation that prevents the synthesis of necessary enzymes.”

“For a squirrel to be born albino, it must inherit this specific recessive gene from both parents, making its occurrence a low-probability event,” states the website.

The site also confirms that what makes a true albino is the pink eye color, “due to the blood vessels visible through the unpigmented tissue.” Olney residents consider these albinos a sign of good luck.

Blandford approves new zoning bylaws

BLANDFORD – The new zoning bylaws for ground mounted solar photovoltaic installations passed with a two-thirds majority vote as called by Moderator David Hopson.

New battery energy storage systems bylaws passed unanimously.

The accompanying Zoning Map, entitled the Battery Energy Overlay District passed as well with an “over two-thirds majority vote” as called by Hopson.

Voters approved unanimously a \$5,676,663 operating budget for the town for the coming fiscal year beginning July 1 and educational expenses for Gateway Regional School District of \$1,786,605 along with vocational education costs of \$297,500.

A new stabilization fund was approved for the Highway Department for “future capital expenses” and funded with an initial deposit of \$25,000.

Removal from voting list notices mailed

BLANDFORD – The Town Clerk’s office has mailed out notices of removal from the voting list to those originally registered voters, who have not returned their street-list/town census forms for several years.

To maintain voter registration status, these forms must be returned as soon as possible. They are postage paid to return to the Town Clerk.

Library completes temporary move

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – The Porter Memorial Library re-opened on Monday, June 8.

Staff completed the move to the temporary space in town hall and opened for regular Monday hours from 2-6 p.m. and everyone at the library is looking forward to greeting patrons.

Regular programming returns with Book Squirms on Wednesday June 10 at 10:30 a.m.with

stories, songs and sensory play for preschoolers and their families. It’s a great way to meet new families in town. This event takes place every Wednesday.

Regular library hours resume, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2-6

p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The library will be closed Friday, June 19 in commemoration of Juneteenth and Saturday, June 27

as the town celebrates the 250th anniversary of American independence.

CommuniTea Reads resumes on Saturday, June 20 at 11 a.m. and will meet in the new location at town hall in the Select Board room. This month they are reading “A Guardian and a Thief” by Megha Majumdar. Anyone can join the book club at any time for great discussions and fellowship.

Pokemon Club resumes on Friday June 26 at 3 p.m. for trading cards, trivia and crafts. This program for middle schoolers is always fun with chats about all things new

from the Pokemon world.

And on a special note, calling all library families to participate in the town’s Happy Birthday American celebration.

Blandford will celebrate the country’s 250th anniversary with events on two days. On Friday, June 26, head to the fairgrounds for live music, picnics, food and fireworks. Festivities start at 6 p.m. with fireworks at dusk.

On Saturday, local children are being welcomed to march in a parade that kicks off at the town hall and ends at the fairgrounds. The parade starts at 11 a.m. From noon-3 p.m. the celebration continues with a return of the Historical Society’s ghosts, music, a free cookout and family games. It will be a weekend full of fun in Blandford.

COA list luncheon menu

BLANDFORD – The next two Council on Aging luncheons are coming up.

The first, Friday, June 12 at noon will have diners enjoying Hemingway’s favorite, Sloppy Joes on a bulky roll. This will be accompanied by French fries and onion rings and a seasonal dessert of rhubarb bars.

The second luncheon is set for Friday, June 26 at noon and features chicken

kabobs, whole roasted potatoes, summer squash and another seasonal dessert, strawberry shortcake.

People may call the COA number at 413-848-4279, extension 400 to leave name and number of people attending the lunches.

There is no charge for the lunches, but if attendees would consider a donation to help keep the program going it would be appreciated.

PLEASE RECYCLE
THIS NEWSPAPER

MEETING

from page 1

help filing older vital statistics in archival slip-sheets, an ongoing project that would give the clerk more time to manage critical issues; stuffing envelopes at street list/census time and inactive voter mailings.

The jobs earn minimum wage to be credited to property tax bills. Anyone interested in participating should contact COA Director Margit Mikuski or Assessor Michaela Smith.

Vandalism

Destruction and damage to the Community Garden, shed and other town property adjacent to the Town Hall was discussed and police have been informed. There is possibility of injury to anyone

jumping on the shed or banging on the generator.

EPSEC report

The Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee report from Jackie Coury gave the last meeting notice to be Wednesday, June 17 at 6 p.m. This is a public meeting. She said their “goals have been achieved,” during twice-a-month meetings which involved working on strengthening the town’s bylaws involving all things solar.

She suggested the town consider creating an Energy Board.

At the close of the meeting, the board proceeded to the gym for the Annual Town Meeting.

CANDIDATES

from page 1

incumbent Cara Letendre, Bradley Curry and Corinne Shartrand; candidate running unopposed for School Committee Katherine McDonough and running unopposed for Library Trustee, Byam Stevens.

Each candidate had five minutes to present their case



Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm
Time keepers were Jane Rohman and John Bianco.

for seeking office, credentials and anything they felt voters should know.

Questions, there were 24 altogether, were given to Gazda to ask. All questions handed forward were asked even though many asked the same or similar questions, such as How can we get people to serve on boards? How can we strengthen our boards? What will you do to help attract new people to our struggling boards? How do we get out of the tax and spend cycle we are in?

What are the biggest issues in town and how do you propose to fix them?

All select board candidates agreed that board retention is a problem and attracting new people is not easy.

Letendre cited social media as detrimental to boards. Shartrand believes most people do not know or understand what various board’s functions are or feel

unqualified to step up. Curry said people willing to serve need to understand that the Select Board is the executive arm of town government and has the final say, while elected and appointed boards tend to the business before them.

Regarding the tax/spend issue, Shartrand stressed seeking other funding sources, but there is a lack of progress because “we need people to help.”

Letendre spoke of Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera’s success with obtaining grants. “There’s a lot out there, but we don’t have the team to go looking,” she said, adding that it would be possible to hire someone to do that for the town. That would be an expensive solution.

Curry said he agreed with Shartrand and Letendre, “The grants are out there, but we need to find them and apply for them,” he said.

All agreed that communication, effective communication is critical. But questions should be put to the correct source. All agreed that it would be most beneficial if residents actually attended select board or finance committee meetings to find answers to questions.

Letendre said, “It’s a challenge, we have to get to the generation that’s not reading minutes.”

There will be a large screen in the town hall lobby with rotating announcements, which may help in the communication effort.

Responding to the question of What can you do to make it nicer (to attend meetings), Shartrand said that people need to be heard and know their issues are heard. “Their issues are important.”

Curry said it is critical to get back to people so they know their voices are heard and Shartrand added, “You

may not like the decision we make, but we’ll tell you why; the law, expense, or just not the right thing to do.

When asked about goals, Curry said, “We need to get back to communication... with residents.”

Letendre cited three things, “maintaining Blandford’s rural character, protecting the town’s natural resources and protecting what makes Blandford Blandford.”

Shartrand focused on spending and finding other resources, consider alternatives, “we have a fiscal responsibility to our town.”

There were questions to Stevens and McDonough about financing for schools and libraries.

McDonough, as a member of the school committee, with have a say in the budget, but cautioned that money is tight and difficult decisions would have to be

made. “Our first priority is to the students, they are our future,” she said. Gateway’s elementary program is tops state wide, “and having a good educational program brings people in,” she said.

Stevens said that libraries in the state have a very active dynamic group with the Board of Library Commissioners in Boston “advocating for us” and that library funding state wide has held.

At the close of the evening, Gazda told the audience that he had never served in the capacity of moderator before, but he appreciated doing it.

“I am so thankful for the opportunity to see democracy in action,” he said.

Jane Rohman and John Bianco served as official time keepers and warned responders with a hand-held sign with remaining time or rang a bell.

SANDISFIELD

Sandisfield Arts Center holds Knox Trail discussion

SANDISFIELD – On Saturday, June 13 five historians will discuss the Knox Trail at Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road.

The passage of Col. Henry Knox’s “Noble Train of Artillery” through Berkshire and Hampden counties in mid-January, 1776, is probably the most significant historical event in the history of the hill towns along this road.

Knox conceived a brilliant, clandestine, 300-mile, 56-day “mission impossible” to transport some 60 tons of artillery to Gen. Washington in Boston. The appearance of the cannons shocked the British Army and Navy, who evacuated the city.

This event changed the course of the American Revolution if not our nation’s

founding on July 4, 1776. America’s 250th year of independence is the best opportunity to highlight this amazing achievement and to raise national awareness about it.

The hope is that the event and the ‘road’ that facilitated it finally get appropriate regional and national recognition.

Five Berkshires historians and the Berkshire County Historical Society have collaborated on a new book called “Ye Trodden Path: A History of the of the Knox Trail and Examination of the Longest Original Section of the Trail in Berkshire County, Mass.”

Over the past several months the group has presented well-attended venues in “witness towns” in New York state and Berkshire



Submitted photo

Contributing authors are from left, Tom Ragusa, Bernie Drew, Rob Hoogs, Gary Leveille and Ron Bernard.

County. They are Bernard Drew and Gary Leveille of Great Barrington, Rob Hoogs of Monterey and Ron Bernard and Tom Ragusa of Sandisfield and Otis.

Ye Trodden Path focuses on the sections of the Knox Trail that traversed the hills and valleys of southern Massachusetts includ-

ing Blandford, Russell and Westfield. It includes new scholarship by these historians that adds to and corrects previous accounts of the episode.

Their 56-page book includes a five-foot color fold-out map detailing what is considered to be the definitive route taken by Knox

through the original section in Sandisfield and Otis. In fact, the decades of research by retired DCR employee, Tom Ragusa was the inception of the concept for this book.

The authors are available to sign copies after a video, panel discussion and audience question and answer.

This will probably be the final opportunity to meet all five authors who are experts on various aspects of the history of the colonial highway called the Great Road, among many other names and today known as the Knox Trail.

The presentation and Q&A will take place on Saturday, June 13 from 10 a.m.-noon, in the main auditorium of the Sandisfield Arts Center, a National Register of Historic Places site.

Admission is \$20. Books are available for sale at \$15.

Reservations may be made by visiting the website at sandisfieldartscenter.org or by purchase at the entrance. For more information people may email Ronald Bernard at Ronbernard@aol.com.

WESTHAMPTON

Library host Loudville mills presentation by author James Bridgman

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Road, will host local historian and author, James Bridgman, on the evening of Thursday, June 25 at 6 p.m.

Numerous nineteenth and early 20th century images will illustrate his presentation of his recent book, “An Impetuous Little Stream: The History of the Mills along the Manhan River in Loudville, Massachusetts, 1815-1915.”

The village of Loudville straddles the borders of Westhampton, Northampton and Easthampton. The first known mill in the area was a sawmill, called King’s Mill, which was located close to where the Clear Falls swimming area was in recent years.

In the early nineteenth century, members of the Kingsley family developed the area around the four corners of Route 66, Loudville

Road and North Loudville Road. They built a carding mill, a woodturning mill, a gristmill, a tavern, a blacksmith shop, a brass foundry, a mill pond and numerous houses near the four corners.

Caleb Loud built the first mill in the lower part of the village. Loud was a talented woodworker who became known throughout New England as an expert on the construction of overshot waterwheels for mills and

factories. His pioneering spirit led to the development of the thriving industrial village that came to bear his name.

Over the years, numerous mills were built along the Manhan River, including four paper mills. Bridgman tells the history of these mills, which were subject to both flooding and fire.

During a flash flood in 1869, for example, Strong Kingsley’s three-story woodturning mill crashed into

the river, sending a torrent of wood and debris downstream. The rolling onslaught damaged or destroyed every other mill along the river. The sawmill and blacksmith shop in the lower village were obliterated, leaving only the bedrock beneath them.

Bridgman documents not only the history of the mills, but also the story of the brick schoolhouse, the early stores, the post office and daily life

in the village. A highlight of the book is excerpts from the memoirs of two women, who grew up in Loudville in the nineteenth century.

This program is free and open to the public in the Westhampton library’s accessible community room.

Following the program, Bridgman will sign copies of his book, which will be available at the library for \$19.95. They may also be purchased on Amazon.



Workers are shown outside the Upper Paper Mill, 1900.

Photos by Howes Brothers



The Upper Paper Mill as it appeared in 1900.

Howes Brothers photo

BECKET

Becket Art Center announces upcoming June events

BECKET – On Wednesday, June 17 from 7-8:30 p.m., the Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will hold its Works in Progress.

Artists of all kinds are encouraged to bring their unfinished or barely started work to share with the community. This is free and open to all.

The Becket Arts Center will hold a Flower Power Garden Party on Saturday, June 20 from 2-5 p.m., at Canterbury Farm, 1986 Fred Snow Road in Becket. Participants should dress up in their favorite trippy 1960s fashion and get ready to celebrate the soundtrack

of the era while enjoying snacks, drinks, amazing gardens, fun games, a raffle and more. Tickets are \$25 and \$20 for members. Children 12 and under are free. The beat goes on, rain or shine.

On Sunday, June 21 at 2 p.m., the Becket Arts Center will present “Voices from the Kaleidoscope,” a panel discussion with LGBTQ+ artists. Jacob Clayton, Pops Peterson, Autumn Phoenix and Saemi, whose works are on display at the arts center, will discuss what inspires them and how queerness does and does not affect their work.

On Wednesday, June 24 from 6-8 p.m., the Becket Arts Center is offering the first of a two-part class “Writing Better Fiction, Memoir and Non-Fiction Work.”

The second session is July 1. Bob Reiss, a best-selling author whose novels and non-fiction books have been published in ten countries, will first present the principles of good story telling and conduct in-class writing exercises.

The second session will mainly concentrate on analyzing work that has been pre-submitted by class members looking for feed-

back. Fees for both workshops, without submitting work for evaluation is \$100. Extra fee for submitting work for analysis is \$100. For more information and registration, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

On Saturday, June 27 from 5-7 p.m., the Becket Arts Center will present Criollo Classico, the most eclectic Caribbean musical ensemble touring today. This energetic family trio is equally versatile in Latin, Classical and Jazz music.

The father, Jose Gonzales, does vocals, and plays lead and rhythm guitars, as well as the Puerto Rican Cuatro. Son Ahmed

Gonzalez does backup vocals, and plays flute and percussion instruments, while Rene Gonzalez, another son, provides bass and Latin percussion.

The outdoor concert will take place at the North Becket Park on Maple Street. Bring folding chairs, coolers, snacks and children. In case of rain, the performance will move to an indoor location. Part of the art’s center’s Music Brings Communities Together program, the concert is free, though donations are always welcome.

For more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

Strawberry shortcake dinner to be held June 20

BECKET – A strawberry shortcake dinner, sponsored by the First Congregational Church will be held on Saturday, June 20 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Guild Hall on YMCA Road.

People may eat in or take out. The menu will be baked tavern ham, baked beans, potato salad, three bean salad and strawberry shortcake with real whipped cream.

Reservations are appreciated for to go meals. Walk-ins are welcome. Adult meal is \$15 and free for children under 13. People may call 413-623-8300 or 413-623-6455 for reservations.

CHESTER

Chester Hill Association holds meeting

CHESTER – The Chester Hill Association will hold its 42nd annual meeting on Sunday, June 14 at 2 p.m. at its restored historic Chester Center Schoolhouse across from 343 Skyline Trail.

A recap of the year’s

activities as well as plans for the coming year will be discussed.

The prestigious “Citizen of the Year” and CHA scholarships will be presented to deserving recipients.

All are invited to attend and learn more about our

organization.

They continue to partner with the Littleville Fair Association in sponsoring community events and are looking for more board members to sustain and grow.

Light refreshments will be served.

Hamilton Memorial Library lists events

CHESTER – Read with Monster is a special upcoming program for children, who would like to practice their reading skills in a fun, unique way.

Monster, a Bright Spot Certified Therapy Dog and his handler, Cara Pease will be coming to the library on Tuesday, June 16 at 3 p.m. and as part of the Summer Reading Program on July 21.

Children, who sign-up, will have the opportunity to spend quality time reading to this furry friend in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Parents and guardians can register their child now for either session by calling 413-354-7808.

The Book Club meets the third Wednesday of each month, this month at June 17 at 4:30 p.m. This month they

will be discussing, “Olive Kitteridge” by Elizabeth Strout.

This Pulitzer Prize winner is a story about a retired schoolteacher, who deplores the changes in her small town and the world at large but doesn’t always recognize the changes in those around her.

There will be snacks and lively discussion. Extra book copies are available.



HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

.....☆ Meet the Class of 2026 ☆.....



David Adzigirey



Pom Sonika Ang



Luna Bean



Ishetia Black



Morgan Blazejewski



Ava Bourbeau



Phoebe Bowser



Joseph Breguet



James Bresnahan



Tessa Burke



Keegan Butler



Colin Cahill



Eliette Cerone



Jayden Childs



Parker Christy



Eleanor Cleary



Isabella Coon-Drawe



Gabriel Couture



Isabelle Couture



Laney Cunningham



Finn DeWitt



Chase Eddy



Jenessy Espada



Ian Felty



Mariska Felty



Abigail Fisette



Alexander Fried



Cody Gaida



Jaelynn Garcia



Luke Gardner



Ezra Gilman



Delaney Hamel



Jayden Hamel



Amelia Hanke



Alexandra Henrichon



Eamonn Hilnbrand



Evan Hoffer



Colin Hogan



Sarah Hultman



Braylon Jarrett



Emily Jendrysik



Nicholas Jones



Rylee Joseph



Efrem Korytoski



Ethan Kudelka



Lacy Kuehner



Makayla Labrie



Jake Laurin



Madelyn Layman

Congratulations
2026 GRADS

from your friends at the

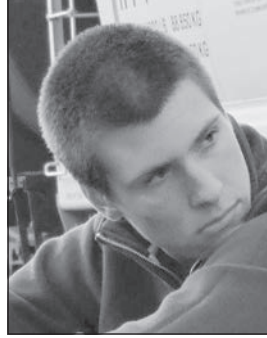
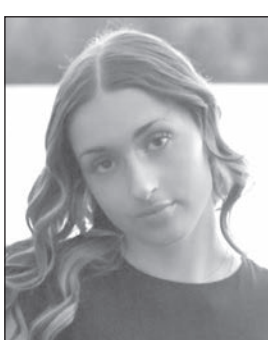


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HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

.....☆ Meet the Class of 2026 ☆.....

						
Indie Lewis	Emma Lynskey	Layce Mancuso	Carlea Manley	Josef Masi	Kinnon McColgan	Kiersten McKay
						
Lucy McVey	Noah Monteiro	Joseph Moro	Reagan Mott	Adam Muller	Augustus Niswonger	Rachel O'Connell
						
Reese O'Connell	Caitlyn Packey	Evelyn Palmer	Andrea Paszko	Lauren Pellegrini	Amelia Perry	Jakob Pok
						
Lillian Popham	Abigail Provost	Elizabeth Puttick	Owen Roch	Logan Rourke	Oscar Schiff	Kiera Shea-Smith
						
Corinne Somes	Tristan Somes	Elisabeth Sturtevant	Bridget Sullivan	Rachael Theroux	Bethany Tobiasz	Avery Tudryn
						
Chelsea Vanasse	Paige Walsh	Maddison Washburn	Lila Watkins	Lucia Winters		

CLASS OF 2026

from page 1

Valedictorian and Class Treasurer Augustus Niswonger spoke about a collection of memories to laugh about with his fellow graduates from now to possibly 10 years in the future.

Niswonger said to his fellow seniors, “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good.” A saying a relative once told him. Niswonger knows that he and his fellow seniors will face challenges of all sorts in their future, but are ready moving forward.

“I’ll always treasure the memories I made with this class,” Niswonger said.

The High School Chorus Seniors would come up to perform “In My Life”, a song by the Beatles.

Principal Lauren Hotz

is Hampshire Regional alumni and got to speak as well during the 54th Commencement. Hotz talked about remembering what this class was dealing with when they first arrived. They began middle school during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hotz wanted to talk about the idea of having purpose in life and how she found her purpose.

“One of my purposes in life is you,” Hotz said.

Hotz encourages the Class of 2026 to think of purpose and shared that it was an honor of being a part of their high school journey.

Superintendent Vito Perrone came up and shared the goals he had set for himself as a Superintendent of

this school. Perrone said he is “fortunate to be a part of the life of the school.”

Despite the challenges each student faced on their high school journey, Perrone feels they’re ready for the future.

“You are ready for whatever life throws at you,” Perrone said.

Perrone encouraged the seniors to build relationships with those in their lives and reminded them that Hampshire Regional High School will always be in their hearts.

“You’re always Raiders,” Perrone said.

Prior to the turning of the tassel, Class President David Adzigirey talked about how important this school is to him and to the rest of the class. At the end, Adzigirey said, “this school is unique and special.”

After the tassels were turned the Hampshire Regional High School Class of 2026 popped the confetti and celebrated with their friends and family.

“I’ll always treasure the memories I made with this class,”

– Augustus Niswonger
Valedictorian and Class Treasurer

Here’s hoping your graduation celebrations were blessed with friendship, family and fun! Today and always, we wish you health, happiness and good fortune as you continue to work hard and reach your dreams.



Congratulations, Class of 2026!

Country Journal

Send us your graduation day photos to share in the Country Journal.

Email: countryjournal@turley.com

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

New river access trail opens

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Students at Chester Elementary School took part in dedicating their new access trail to the river, thanks to a grant from the Westfield Wild and Scenic Committee, advisors from Conservation Works and the hard work of Ann Marie MacDonald's fifth graders.

Students and staff gathered for a ribbon cutting ceremony with guests Andy Vecchio and Pete Westover from Conservation Works and Carol Waag and Dave Pierce from the Westfield Wild and Scenic Committee.

Principal Todd Gazda gave a brief speech thanking Conservation Works, the Wild and Scenic Committee, the Westfield River Watershed Association and the Gateway Education Foundation for their support of this project. Former Principal Vanna Maffuccio was also acknowledged by Gazda for writing the grant that funded the project.

He and the fifth graders then gathered behind the ribbon to share in opening the trail. They cut the ribbon and the fifth graders then lined

the upper section of the trail as each class, in turn, walked down to a point in the trail where they could view the outdoor area and the river.

Students then returned to class and guests were treated to a trail mix buffet that, of course, included Swedish fish.

Last Nov. 10, 2025, MacDonald's fifth graders finished their final day of working with Vecchio and Westover, where they had identified and pulled invasive plants and cut the new trail to the West Branch of the Westfield River. A previous trail behind the school could only be used by the upper grades because it was too steep for younger children. Now an area has been cleared along the river as an outdoor learning space and all ages can safely get there.

Earlier in 2025, the project had successfully presented plans to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Special Program as well as the Chester Conservation Commission for approval. Conservation Works was paid to prepare the trail improvement and invasive plant control plan that could



Principal Todd Gazda delivered remarks and thanked the many local organizations that supported this project.

be enacted by students with their support.

Over twenty bags of invasive plants were removed and disposed of last fall, but they will grow back. It will be up to next year's fifth graders to continue the process of keeping that trail cleared for the school.

Vecchio and Westover returned this spring to clean up some winter storm damage along the trail.



Andy Vecchio, teacher Ann Marie MacDonald and Pete Westover reunited for the ribbon cutting ceremony on June 5 that officially opened a new, more accessible trail to the river behind Chester Elementary School.



Gazda and the fifth grade class lined up to take part in the ribbon cutting and official opening of the trail.

Turley Publications photos by Wendy Long

Littleville Elementary celebrates therapy dog team with ‘Dory Day’

HUNTINGTON On March 28, Littleville Elementary School held a special event focused on teaching students how to safely and respectfully interact with dogs.

Students from all grade levels participated in an engaging presentation about how to be a good “dog listener” around both family pets and unfamiliar dogs.

The event included an informative question and answer session where students learned important lessons about dog body language, safety and kindness toward animals. The presentation helped children better understand how dogs communicate and how people can build safe and positive relationships with them.

Following the presentation, the school community came together for a heartfelt celebration honoring Littleville Elementary's beloved therapy dog team, Dory the golden retriever and her handler, Steve Monkiewicz, for their outstanding service and dedication to the students and staff.

A touching slideshow featuring photos of Dory and Steve visiting classrooms throughout the years was shown while the song, “You’ve Got a Friend in Me” played in the background.

The slideshow highlighted the joy, comfort and support the therapy dog team has brought to the school community.



Dory, a Golden retriever, enjoys time with her friends at Littleville Elementary School in Huntington.

Students proudly wore handmade Dory headbands and participated in several activities to celebrate the special day. Younger students wrote kind words describing Dory on colorful paw prints, while older students reflected on why every school should have a therapy dog like Dory.

The thoughtful messages showed just how much Dory has meant to the students over the years.

Staff members also created a special poster reading “Dory Makes Our Days Pawsitively Amazing,” which was presented to Steve as a thank you gift from the Littleville

Elementary community.

During the celebration, Steve was also surprised with the “Golden Retriever Kindness Award” for exemplifying what students and staff proudly call “Dory Traits” which are kindness, patience, comfort, loyalty and unconditional support.

During their visits to



Dory and her handler, Steve Monkiewicz listen to elementary students read/

classrooms and while interacting with students, both Steve and Dory have shown what it means to care for others and how to spread positivity. In honor of Dory, Littleville Elementary also organized a donation drive to support the local animal shelter.

Families generously donated supplies to help animals in need, continuing Dory's message of kindness and compassion.

The celebration included fun treats for everyone.

Students enjoyed “Scooby Snacks,” while Dory was surprised with her own dog bone shaped cake and a cuddly Highland cow stuffed animal to take home.

The day was filled with smiles, laughter and gratitude as students and staff celebrated the lasting impact Dory and Steve have made at Littleville Elementary.

Their kindness, comfort, and dedication have touched countless lives and created memories that students will cherish for years to come.

Horace Smith Fund awards \$311,000 to area students

SPRINGFIELD – On Thursday, June 18 at 6 p.m., The Horace Smith Fund will hold its 127th Annual Corporators’ Meeting and scholarship awards ceremony at the Carriage House of Storowton Tavern for recipients, their parents, school counselors and Corporators.

This year’s scholarship recipients who are graduating seniors are from the following high schools:

East Longmeadow High School: Lily S. Gurung, Brodie T. Truong and Emerson C. Vigneux

Gateway Regional High School: Theodore L. DeAngelis-Page and Eliza J. Mueller

Longmeadow High School: Yewon Kim

Ludlow Senior High School: Benjamin B. Goodreau

Minnechaug Regional High School: Aidan J.

Dzierwinski and Tyler W. Jaslanek

Pope Francis Preparatory School: Akosua A. Ahenkang, Marcus K. Tran and Oliver Tran

Springfield Central High School: Gabrielle S. Siphonum

Springfield International Charter School: Joseph Wong

West Springfield High School: Mia E. Francis and Kaleigh A. Schneider

Westfield High School: Brandon T. Cekovsky and Lani J. Ching

This year’s scholarship recipients who are already in college are: Elms College: Cialanly E. Ricardi (Belchertown High School), MCPHS: Anna Zhao (Agawam High School), WNEU: Janiya A. Martinez (Springfield Central High School) and Worcester Polytechnic Institute: Nicholas

M. Ritchie (Pope Francis Preparatory School).

The four fellowship recipients are graduates of the following colleges and high schools: AIC: Saniya J. Stewart (Chicopee Comprehensive High School), Harvard University: Richard Darkwa (West Springfield High School), Lafayette College: Roman F. Conca (West Springfield High School) and Springfield College: Katelynn R. Mersincavage (Hampden Charter School of Science East).

Students were selected on a variety of criteria, including their test scores, class rank, extra-curricular activities, and a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance.

Wayne Webster, Chair of the Board of Trustees, announced that this year there will be 21 Walter S.

Barr Scholarships awards with 17 going to graduating high school seniors and four to recipients currently attending college. The William R. Rooney Award will be granted to one high school candidate who has received special education services.

There are also four Walter S. Barr Fellowship recipients. Providing that students maintain at least a B average in college, each scholarship provides a total of up to \$12,000 over four years and each fellowship provides up to \$15,000 over two years. Therefore, The Horace Smith Fund is happy to be able to grant a total award of \$311,000 to area students this year.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith. He and Daniel Wesson were the founders of Smith &

Wesson, located in Springfield.

Mr. Smith’s will provided that the residual of his estate, after several bequests to relatives and institutions, was to be used for public purposes at the discretion of his executors. They decided that it should be used to help deserving students finance their education.

The Walter S. Barr Scholarships and Fellowships are named for a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950. The William R. Rooney Award is named for a past Executive Director with a desire to assist special needs students. All recipients must be residents of Hampden County.

Applications for next year’s awards will be available Sept. 15 on-line at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by calling 413-739-4222.

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.

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

COLLEGE NOTES

Colleges and universities announce President's and Dean's lists

PRESIDENT'S LIST
Southern New Hampshire University
Manchester, New Hampshire

Felicia Dearborn of Westfield
Amber Grimaldi of Westfield
Joseph Charland of Westfield
Viviana Piotrowski of Westfield
Ashley Yost of Westfield
Jason Ilnicki of Huntington
Angie Pappas of Easthampton

Western New England University
Springfield

Bianca Acosta of Westfield
Nathan Biddulph of Easthampton
Kelsey Bouchard of Westfield
Emma Cassell of Westfield
Ryan Charland of Westfield
Jessica Cloutier of Easthampton
Abigail Dean of Easthampton
Kailey Downs of Westfield
Alison Goodreau of Westfield
Matvey Hancharonak of Westfield
Christina Harris of Montgomery
Colby LaPoint of Westfield
Aiden Levesque of Westfield
Richard Moritko of Westfield
Jaiden O' Kane of Westfield
Zakery Thibodeau of Easthampton

DEAN'S LIST
Assumption College
Worcester

Jessica Armstrong of Westfield
Hannah Keeney of Westfield
Briana Reiser of Westfield

Bridgewater State University
Bridgewater

Erin E. Teague of Easthampton
Brianna O. Wool of Easthampton
Hamich R. Cox of Florence
Brady P. McDonald of Florence
Aubree J. Dacosta of Northampton
HaileyM. Arnold of Pittsfield
Matthew R. Curtis of Pittsfield
Michelle Pinos of Pittsfield
Mike D. Vera Cortes of Pittsfield
Alexana R. Washburn of Pittsfield
Ian F. Bacon of Westfield
Alexa R. Carrasquillo of Westfield
Elexa K. Carrasquillo of Westfield
James J. Coach of Westfield
Sydney H. Drugan of Westfield
David M. Forest of Westfield
Aidan M. Gall of Westfield
Mia D. Howell of Williamsburg

Nazareth University
Rochester, New York

William O'Neill of Cummington

Southern New Hampshire University
Manchester, New Hampshire

Dominique Rogers of Westfield
Briawna Corrales of Westfield
Cooper Fern of Easthampton

Quinnipiac University
Hamden, Connecticut

Chloe Govani of Blandford
Abigail Kane of Easthampton
Benjamin Shannon of Otis
Landon Richard of Russell

Western New England University
Springfield

Matthew Armstrong of Easthampton
Elizabeth Baker of Westfield
Rachel Brenzel of Westfield
Maura Campbell of Westhampton
Ryan Charland of Westfield
James Cloutier of Westfield
Zachary Cloutier of Easthampton
Ariana Contreras-Munoz of Westfield
Brooke Darling of Westfield
Connor Donovan of Westfield
Kailey Downs of Westfield
Matvey Hancharonak of Westfield
Mason Labranche of Russell
Ryan LaPoint of Westfield
Philip Morin of Cummington
Isaac Ribeiro of Westfield
Vasco Sardinha of Westfield

PUBLIC NOTICES

Westhampton Conservation Commission REQUEST FOR DETERMINATION OF APPLICABILITY (RDA)
The Westhampton Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing pursuant to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, to consider the **Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA)** filed by Philip Dowling. 40 Hathaway Road, Westhampton, MA for: Demo Existing 39' x 25' garage and replace it with a 40' x 26' garage. same location, except 1' east and 1' north (away from intermittent streambed), located at 40 Hathaway Road, Westhampton, MA.

The meeting will be held on **June 17, 2026 at 7:00 pm** at the Town Hall in Westhampton, MA. A copy of the RDA (WPA Form 1) will be available for public inspection at the meeting.

Brad Morse, Chairman
Westhampton Conservation Commission
6/11/2026

Town of Blandford Conservation Commission Legal Notice

At its next regularly scheduled meeting on **Tuesday, June 23rd, 2026, at 6:00 PM** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a **Notice of Intent (NOI)** for the construction of a driveway with a wetland crossing on South Street, in the Town of Blandford. NOI submitted by Smith Environmental, representing David Hopson. The Commission will make its determination in accordance with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended).

Plans and additional information are on record in the Office of the Conservation Commission. Respectfully,
Town of Blandford Conservation Commission
06/11/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD26P1136EA
Estate of: Mary Ann Ellis Also Known As: Mary Ann C Ellis a/k/a Mary Ellis a/k/a Mary A Ellis
Date of Death: October 22, 2025
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Dilip B. Patel of New York City, NY** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Dilip B. Patel of New York City, NY has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate,

including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 06/11/2026

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF HUNTINGTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARINGS
The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **Monday, June 29, 2026 beginning at 6:00 pm** in Stanton Hall. The Public Hearing is scheduled for 6:00 pm for the Special Permit Application of Holly Neylon DBA The River House Bar & Grill of 93 Pomeroy Road, Montgomery, MA to reopen the former Rapids Bar & Grill under a new name at 200 Worthington Road, Parcel # 326-1A.

The Special Permit Application will be available to view **by appointment** in the office of the Selectboard during regular business hours after June 15, as well as at the Public Hearing.

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Huntington
06/11, 06/18/2026

TOWN OF BLANDFORD REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TREASURER/COLLECTOR SERVICES
Proposal documents may be obtained:
• Pickup at Blandford Town Hall
• COMMBUYS

Sealed proposals shall be received no later than: Friday June 29th, 2026 at 4:00 PM
Submission Address:
Town of Blandford
Blandford Town Hall
1 Russell Stage Road
Blandford, MA 01088
06/11/2026

Town of Worthington Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing
In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, the Worthington Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing in response to a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) regarding proposed work associated with culverts at:
44 West Street
127 Harvey Road
The Hearings will be held **Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 7:00 PM** in the Selectboard meeting room at Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road
06/11/2026

TOWN OF GOSHEN Conservation Commission Notice of Public Meeting
The Goshen Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting under the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, (M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40 on **June 15, 2026 at 6:30 PM** at the Goshen Town Office to review a Request for Determination filed by Barbara R. Lacey for 58 West Shore Drive. The work to be reviewed is replacement of frost-heaved deck pylons and repairs to the original foundation drain piping that is collapsing to mitigate future frost heaving.
06/11/2026

WASHINGTON

Family Fun Day takes place on June 27

WASHINGTON – On Saturday, June 27 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Family Fun Day takes place in Washington Town Park.

The Tanglewood Marionettes are heading west from Ware bringing with them The Fairy Circus. Over 20 hand-crafted marionettes will dance, play instruments, juggle, contort, transform and of course fly through the air with the greatest of ease.

A lively puppetry demonstration will take place prior to the show.

The ponies will be coming over the mountain again this year from Home Farm at Undermountain in Lenox. Lori Pestrana, executive director of the farm, promises to bring along their newly acquired herd of young goats.

The beautiful ballerinas from the Dalton Ballet will twirl in with their performance this year of excerpts from “Frozen,” the Disney movie adaptation of the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale “The Snow Queen.”

Town trucks and rescue vehicles will be lined up again for touch a truck at the front entrance to the park. Young aspiring firefighters and road crew enthusiasts can try out the driver seats and see what it's like behind the wheel of these majestic machines.

Balloon Ben is first on the list of entertainers creating balloon creatures of all kinds. He will be around from 10-11 a.m. and later from noon-1 p.m.

The Dalton Ballet, to perform at 11:30 a.m. will not be the first graceful performers in the lineup. Laurel Linski will be guiding intrinsic movement exercises beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Face Painting with Deb will be available from 11a.m. to 2 p.m.

At noon, Terry A La Berry will be dancing and singing his tunes while the Marionettes get ready to perform the Fairy Circus at 1 p.m. under the big tent.

Some of the children may have their handmade treasures with them that they made in the Fairy Garden over on the far side of the park, under the trees beyond the swings. And they may meet Smoky Bear on their way to the pony rides. Rides will be available all day, so ride once, ride twice! It's all free.

Meanwhile, back in the Highway Department lot at the rear of the park, for the first time, Family Fun Day will have a car show from noon-3 p.m.

Maybe there's a model T in the garage or a souped-up old Chevy, or a vintage Porche. Maybe the old truck your Dad's been tinkering with would delight vintage car

enthusiasts. If people would like to participate they may call 413-623-8878, extension 1 or email at washingtontown-adm@gmail.com.

If all this is not enough, there will be line dancing from 2-4 p.m..

Free bags of popcorn should stave off any hunger until the Just Kickin It Barbecue. Westfield Wild and Scenic will have a booth as will the Becket Athenaeum, the Becket Art Center and the County Sheriff. Blood pressure monitoring will be provided by local RNs.

All this is made possible with support from the Central Berkshire Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Oldcastle APG and the local Cultural Councils of Hinsdale, Peru and Washington, all supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Gates open at 10 a.m.

NORTHAMPTON

Forbes Library showcases 250th historical display

NORTHAMPTON – From now through Friday, June 13, visitors are invited to explore historical documents and informational displays showcasing Northampton's contributions to what George Washington famously called “the cause of liberty” at the Forbes Library, 20 West St.

The exhibit also features information about Revolutionary War Patriots buried in Northampton's historic Bridge Street Cemetery. In addition to the historical displays, visitors can: browse and borrow books specially selected by librarians, participate in a library-wide history scavenger hunt, share reflections and appreciation in a community gratitude box, view two award-winning essays written by students from JFK Middle School and learn about Northampton's

role in America's founding and its enduring legacy.

The celebration will culminate on Saturday, June 13 from 10 a.m.-noon when community members gather at Bridge Street Cemetery to honor approximately 175 Revolutionary War Patriots buried there. The ceremony will commemorate their service and sacrifice and recognize Northampton's important place in the story of

American independence.

Betty Allen Chapter DAR created for the America 250 a display in the lobby, highlighting Northampton's rich Revolutionary-era history and the local patriots who helped shape the nation.

The public is warmly invited to attend both the exhibit and the commemorative ceremony as part of the nationwide America 250 observance.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection announces Green Team awards

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recognized students from 75 classrooms across Massachusetts with Green Team Awards for outstanding environmental stewardship and educational activities.

The Green Team is a statewide program sponsored by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and MassDEP to empower students and teachers to take action in their communities to protect the environment. For more than

20 years, the program has worked with Massachusetts students of all ages to reduce pollution and protect the environment, focusing on recycling, composting and sustainability.

During the 2025-2026 school year, 426 Green Teams from 402 schools engaged 67,856 students.

Locally, HEC Academy, Collaborative for Educational Services in Northampton was one of the grand prize winners. The HEC Academy Green Team, led by Amy Stamm, continues to collab-

orate directly with their city to prioritize reuse, donation, and repair to meet the specific needs within their community.

The HEC Academy Green Team was selected to present and serve on a panel at the Massachusetts Farm and Sea to School Conference, providing students with the opportunity to share their initiatives and impact with stakeholders from across the state.

The Green Team learned more about climate-resilient farming practices through Grow Food Northampton, adding connections and

applied lessons to their on-site garden-to-table cooking program. Students are researching and writing letters to food system leaders and local government officials to advocate for flood mitigation policies that support local farms.

Great Barrington: Brookside Intensive Treatment Unit, Team Leader Cindy Konrad (Grades: 7-9) received an Earth Day sticker for reusable water bottles for each participating student.

These environment-focused activities range from

expanding school recycling programs to promoting water conservation. The program incorporates classroom disciplines from the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as reading, writing, art, and other non-classroom, interrelated projects. A full list of activities can be found on the Green Team website.

Participating teams were entered in a drawing for prizes, and 75 Green Teams received prizes for their efforts. Eight schools won grand prizes, and 24 schools

were recognized for going “above and beyond” with their efforts to promote sustainability and responsible leadership in their communities, in particular areas of focus. All 32 winners will receive a gift card that can be used for a party to celebrate their hard work and dedication, or for materials or equipment that support their Green Team efforts. Additionally, each participating student in 43 Green Team classes will receive an Earth Day sticker for their impressive work this school year.

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☆...Congratulations

HRHS CLASS OF 2026

...☆



95 seniors represented the Hampshire Regional High School Graduating Class of 2026. This was the 54th commencement for the school.



Kinnon McColgan is surrounded by his family after graduating from Hampshire Regional High School.



Bridget Sullivan with her high school diploma.



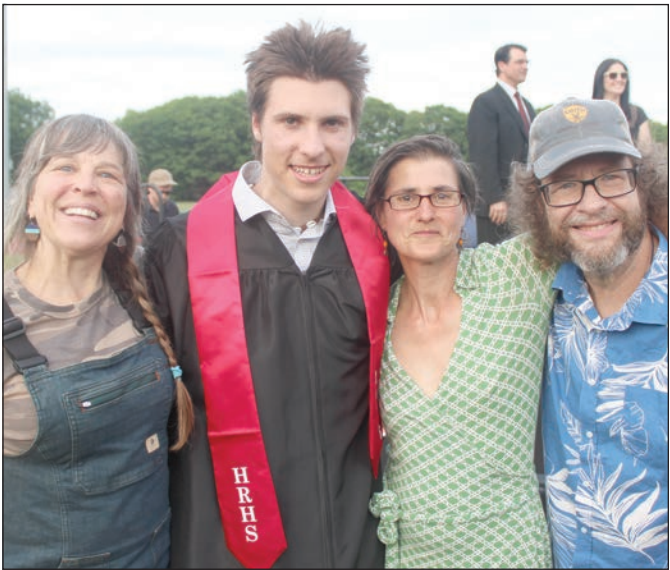
Left to right stands high school friends Logan Rourke and Amelia Perry.



Abigail Provost posing with her diploma.



Class of 2026 Valedictorian and Treasurer Augustus Niswonger making his way down the stage after receiving his high school diploma.



Adam Muller alongside his family after the graduation ceremony was complete.



Class of 2026 Vice President Rachel O'Connell posing with her diploma.



Class of 2026 Secretary Eleanor Cleary posing with her diploma.



Left to right stands Alexander Fried, James Bresnahan, and Joseph Masi, three of the 95 graduating seniors of Hampshire Regional High School.



Principal Lauren Hotz speaking during the ceremony.



Superintendent Vito Perrone during his speech during the graduation ceremony. Perrone said, "You're always Raiders."



Amelia Hanke standing next to her proud parents.



The Chamber Singers performing the National Anthem.



The High School Chorus Seniors performing "In My Life" by The Beatles.

Turley Photos by Ryan Drago