

Country Journal

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Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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CHESTERFIELD CELEBRATES THE FOURTH OF JULY



This classic truck pulls a float in the Fourth of July parade. See more photos on page 12. Turley photos by Deborah Daniels



This horse pulls a cart in Chesterfield's parade.

BLANDFORD

SWSC reports unauthorized trespass

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera received word from Springfield Water and Sewer Commission of unauthorized trespass and mowing on their property on Cobble Mountain Road.

The .22 acres being mowed is "an open field, which poses a challenge for posting 'No Trespassing' signs." The SWSC staff does not know who is trespassing and mowing.

The property is in the 100-foot buffer zone of bordering vegetated wetlands, which is protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.

SWSC indicated in their notice to the town that they would place boulders at the roadside and post no trespassing signs on the property. However, no boulders have been placed as of July 4, just upright posts for the signs. The signs have been taken.

Looking at the property involved, it appears that mowing has continued. As a result, SWSC has notified the Chester/Blandford Police Chief Jen Dubiel to file a police report on this "act of vandalism" and investigate same. There may be penalties.



Property owned by Springfield Water and Sewer Commission on Cobble Mountain Road shows area still mowed and four posts with no signs. Turley Publications Photos by Mary Kronholm



Around the corner from the property in question is wetlands vegetation.

HUNTINGTON

Otan Vargas to perform on Town Green July 17

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Singer/songwriter Otan Vargas will perform at the Huntington Town Green from on Thursday, July 17 from 6:30-8 p.m.

This is part of the weekly summer concert series on the green organized by the Huntington Community Events Committee. Vargas hails from Tondo, Manila—a place where people struggle on a daily basis. It is well known as one of the poorest regions in the Philippines. Born and raised there, Vargas spent his formative years surrounded mostly by poverty and despair. It is this humble background that has helped motivate him throughout his life.

Vargas' music is a powerfully simplistic combination of soul-stirring vocals



Otan Vargas is the July 17 performer for Huntington's Summer Concert Series on the town green from 6:30 - 8 p.m. Submitted photo

accompanied by a dark earthy acoustic guitar. He writes songs about man's struggles, sorrow and pain and finding the strength to persevere. What started out simply as a means of personal therapy for Vargas has transformed into an inspirational beacon for adoring fans worldwide.

In addition to this stop in Huntington, Vargas' summer schedule includes performances in Maine, Massachusetts, New York and at the Wolf Den at Mohegan Sun Casino. This week's bake sale will be hosted by It Takes A Village.

Since 2009, It Takes a Village has provided free postpartum and early parenting support to families with babies and young children living in

OTAN VARGAS, page 3

BLANDFORD

Select Board discuss Special Town Meeting

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

There may or may not be a Special Town Meeting with non-binding referendum questions later this month.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera had forwarded the three proposed questions to town counsel and was waiting for a response as of Thursday, July 3.

Several members of the Citizens Enlightening Blandford collective unit attended the Monday, June 30 Select Board meeting to discuss potential problems facing the town as a result of solar energy installations. The board did discuss the possibility of

an STM to get an idea of where residents are regarding the expansion of the NSTAR/Eversource substation on North Blandford Road, the development of additional commercial-scale solar energy projects and the siting and development of Battery Energy Storage Systems in town. Such an STM would help the board understand and provide direction for whether residents support or oppose solar/energy installations.

According to Ferrera, the Energy Facilities Siting

MEETING, page 5



Trailer Repairs

- Repair lights / Convert to LED
- Trailer Wiring
- Electric / Hydraulic Brakes
- Hubs / Springs / Axles
- Welding repairs
- Hitches

Truck Accessories

- Lighting and Wiring
- Brake Controllers
- Gooseneck & Fifth Wheel Hitch Installs
- Air Lift Truck Suspension Install

Truck Bodies

- Utility
- Flat Bed
- Dump Body



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HILLTOWNS

Ortho MA walk-in Orthopedic urgent care clinic opens

HILLTOWNS —Ortho MA, 53 Southampton Road, announces its walk-in orthopedic urgent care clinic is now open and serving patients across Western Massachusetts. It is conveniently located just off Exit 41 on I-90. Ortho MA provides fast, expert care for musculoskeletal injuries. At Ortho MA, patients find expert care close to home without the stress and delays of a crowded emergency room. Open seven days a week with extended evening and weekend hours, the clinic is designed for immediate access to orthopedic care without the need for an appointment. Patients are seen by a skilled team of orthopedic physician assistants with decades of experience in both routine and

complex musculoskeletal care. Clinic hours are Monday–Friday from 4-8 p.m., Saturday–Sunday from 8 a.m.–noon. Walk-in services include: evaluation and treatment of sprains, strains, and other orthopedic injuries; fracture management and casting and joint injections and other non-surgical orthopedic care. “We’re proud to bring accessible, specialized orthopedic care to all of Western Massachusetts,” said Joseph V. Zwirko, PA-C, co-founder of Ortho MA. “For many, it’s just a short drive to receive the right care right away—without sitting in a crowded ER for hours.” Tamer Bahgat, PA-C, added: “This clinic was built with the patient in mind—convenient hours, no appoint-

ments necessary, and experienced providers who are ready to treat injuries quickly and effectively.” Meet the OrthoMA Team: Joseph V. Zwirko, PA-C over 15 years of orthopedic and emergency medicine experience; Tamer Bahgat, PA-C more than 20 years in trauma and orthopedic care, including military medical service and Timothy B. Rice, PA-C Board-certified, with 20+ years of experience in orthopedic and sports medicine. With over 50 years of combined expertise, the Ortho MA team is committed to keeping Western Massachusetts active and pain-free, one patient at a time. For more information, people may visit www.orthoma.org or call 413-83-ORTHO.

MassDOT announces upcoming I-90 roadwork

HILLTOWNS —The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces overnight paving, milling, and bridge painting operations on I-90 westbound and eastbound in the towns of Stockbridge and Becket. All work will take place during overnight hours and will be complete on Friday, July 11 by 5:30 a.m. In Stockbridge paving operations will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 0.0 to mile marker 4.5 nightly now through Thursday, July 10 from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m. Milling operations will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 0.0 to mile marker 4.5 nightly

now through Thursday, July 10 from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m. The I-90 eastbound exit 3 on-ramp will be closed on Friday morning, July 11 from 1-5 a.m. Detour signage will be in place to direct traffic. In Becket bridge painting will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 18.4 nightly now through Thursday, July 10 from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m. Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to guide drivers through the work area. Drivers traveling through the area should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. All sched-

uled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice. For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Dial 511 and select a route to hear real time conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

Hilltown 6 hosts pottery tour offered on July 26 and 27

HILLTOWNS — On the last weekend of every July (July 26 and 27), Hilltown 6 potters and their guests invite the community into their studios to witness their ancient art in action during the Hilltown 6 Pottery Tour. The potters will welcome attendees to watch as they showcase various techniques and materials with scheduled demonstrations and participatory events throughout both days. The artists will share how they

shape earth into beautiful and distinctive objects. During the tour, visitors will: Watch as clay artists craft teapots, vases, pitchers, and more from start to finish. See artists throw pots on a foot-powered treadle wheel. Walk inside a giant wood-burning kiln and taste fresh bread baked in a ceramic flame-proof cloche. The Hilltown 6 Pottery Tour makes for a delightful, family-friendly weekend spent traversing the scenic

hills that rise out of the Pioneer Valley and taking in all that the hilltowns have to offer. During the peak of New England’s picturesque summer, visitors will also encounter farm stands and small businesses supplying locally the locally grown bounty of the season, from fresh eggs to homemade preserves to artisanal brews. This year, Hilltown 6 is celebrating the event’s community spirit by donating a portion of each artist’s proceeds to the Food Bank

of Western Massachusetts. Visitors to the 2025 pottery tour will not only get to experience the close-knit feel of the Hilltowns and support local artists — they will also help put food on the tables of those most in need. With the combined beauty of handcrafted art and the western Massachusetts landscape, it’s no wonder that the tour has become a nationally recognized event. In past years, the event has drawn

company from all corners of the state, as well as New York, Boston, Hartford, Albany and beyond. Hilltown 6 is a group of now eight nationally renowned potters based in the Hilltowns: Robbie Heidinger, Christy Knox, Maya Machin, Michael McCarthy, Hiroshi Nakayama, Mark Shapiro, Constance Talbot and Sam Taylor. This year’s tour will also feature 18 guests from around the country. For a complete demon-

strations schedule, studio map, information on participating artists and more, visit hilltown6.com. 2025 guests are Normandy Alden, Hayne Bayless, Celia Feldberg, Dan Finnegan, Stuart Gair, Yeonsoo Kim, Billie Li, Jeffrey Lipton, Matthew Meunier, Mary Risley, Tandem Ceramics, Justine and Grant Figura, Sumiyo Toribe, Waterwheel Clay, Ben Bonsall and Garrett Sanders, Tom White and Sophie Yoon.

Hilltown Hikers to hold group hike to Snow Hole Taconic Crest

HILLTOWNS — Western Mass Hilltown Hikers will hold a group hike to Snow Hole Taconic Crest on Saturday, July 26 at 10 a.m. Parking will be in the Petersburg Pass Parking Lot on Route 2, Williamstown by the Petersburg, New York state line. The hike rating is moderate and 5.8 miles in and back ridgeline hike with 872 feet of total elevation gain. The group will hike

along the scenic ridge trail known as the Taconic Crest to the “Snowhole” on the Taconic Mountain Range where Massachusetts, New York and Vermont come together. This rare geophysical treasure is a 40-50-foot-deep bedrock chasm that holds snow and ice well into the warmest summer months. They will start at the lost Petersburg Pass Ski Resort founded in 1962 on the New York and Massachusetts bor-

der. They will enjoy many scenic vistas on the trail maintained by the Williams College Outing Club inside the Memorial Forest and by the State of New York and the Taconic Crest Club. The start of the walk from the parking area is fairly steep, but very short, then they follow the Taconic Crest Trail over gently rolling terrain for approximately 1-1.5 hours passing the Shepard’s Well and Birch Brook side trails

along the way. Participants should bring a good camera, head lamp and snacks. They are hiking three states and enjoying the scenic vistas to Vermont. They will hike rain or shine. Registration is required. People should register per car load by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com>. Maps and bottled water are provided. Well behaved dogs are allowed. The event

is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$15. More details are available by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. People may email westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com or call/text 413-302-0312 if they have any questions. As always be prepared for rocks, mud and roots, bring trekking poles. For those who want to hike every weekend year-round they may become a Hilltown Hiker mem-

ber. They will get access to a private Messenger Group Text with hike and event announcements that are member exclusive events. People can sign up by visiting www.HilltownHikers.com. Tees, hoodies, hats, patches and bags will be for sale by donation at the event. See all our events, maps, blog and photos at www.hilltownhikers.com. Please keep our beautiful places clean and carry in and carry out.

Gas prices ease down a penny for customers respite tumultuous markets

HILLTOWNS — Northeast gasoline prices are mostly staying put after a tumultuous week for oil and gas markets that ultimately ended with sharply lower crude oil prices and less pressure on prices at the pump. This is good news for drivers heading into the Fourth of July holiday travel period, as local pump prices remain considerably lower than this time last year. With virtually all the crude oil price increases stemming from Middle East tensions evaporating from petroleum markets by the middle

of last week, the focus for commodities traders shifted to domestic supply and demand readings that show demand for gasoline continues to increase, but supplies remain strong as well. The Energy Information Administration last week reported a third straight weekly increase in gasoline demand, which rose nearly 400,000 barrels a day over the prior week in line with expectations for strong demand typically seen in early summer. That higher demand was a factor in national inventories of gasoline

declining by 2.1 million barrels in total, according to the EIA, which might put additional upward pressure on pump prices. But in the Northeast, regional inventories actually increased by just over 2 million barrels, bucking the national trend. Regional supplies are now up 3.2 million barrels over last year and comfortably positioned ahead of the July 4 holiday and the next few peak weeks of the summer driving season. “Recent geopolitical events showcased the volatile nature of oil and gas markets, but right now sup-

ply and demand are the primary factors impacting how much it costs to fill our tanks,” said Jillian Young, director of public relations for AAA Northeast. “While regional pump prices are up slightly from a month ago, they remain more than 35 cents lower per gallon than this time last year; great news for those heading out for Fourth of July road trips.” The average gas price in Massachusetts is down a penny from last week (\$3.08), averaging \$3.07 per gallon. Today’s price is seven cents higher

than a month ago (\$3.00) and 39 cents lower than this day last year (\$3.46). Massachusetts’ average gas price is 11 cents lower than the national average. AAA Northeast’s June 30 survey of fuel prices found the current national average down four cents from last week (\$3.22), averaging \$3.18 per gallon. Today’s national average price is two cents higher than a month ago (\$3.16) and 31 cents lower than this day last year (\$3.49). Today, Mississippi and Oklahoma have the lowest prices in the nation at

\$2.71 and \$2.73, respectively. California and Hawaii hold the highest prices in the nation this week at \$4.59 and \$4.47, respectively. Massachusetts holds the 25th place on the list of lowest gas prices in the nation. AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing nearly 6.8 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, financial and auto-related services.

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Corrections

The Chesterfield town wide tag sale was incorrectly listed as Saturday, Sept. 5. The date is Saturday, Sept. 6 and rain date is Sunday, Sept. 7.

Lou Belhumer was incorrectly listed as a veteran in the June 5 edition. She is the Memorial Day Committee chairman for Huntington and a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

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HUNTINGTON

Randy Noojin to perform at North Hall

HUNTINGTON – In Seeger, talented actor Randy Noojin brings the legend and music of Pete Seeger to life on Sunday, July 13 at 2 p.m. in North Hall, 40 Searle Road.

His program is a combination of live performance and a multimedia show of film clips and photos. The critically acclaimed solo show Seeger, as well as Randy's Hard Travelin' with Woody, premiered at The New York International Fringe Festival and continues to tour nationwide.

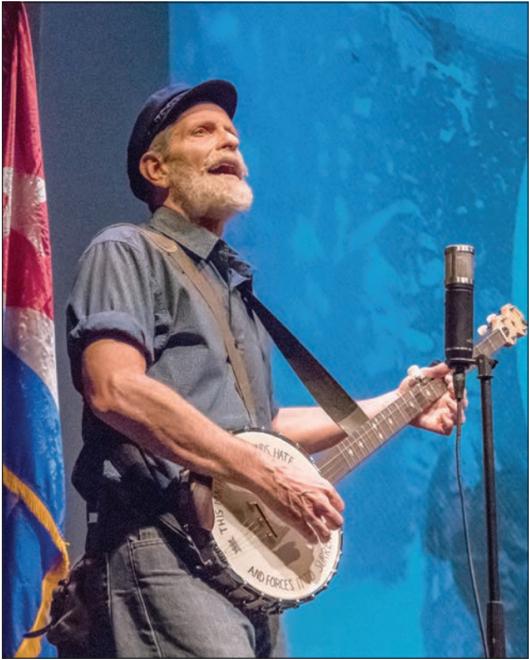
Randy Noojin has acted in hundreds of plays regionally and in New York. He was nominated for a Best Actor AriZoni Award for his performance of Martin in Edward Albee's "The Goat or Who is Sylvia" at Actor's Theatre of Phoenix, directed by Marshall W. Mason. He has played Hank Williams in numerous productions of Hank Williams: Lost

Highway.

He holds a Master in Fine Arts in performance from Arizona State University. Randy also holds an MFA from The University of Iowa's Playwrights Workshop.

All performances are free; donations welcomed. Performances begin at 2 p.m. People should come early to get a good seat. Doors open about 1:30 p.m. People may visit the website at www.northhall-huntington.org for program updates. North Hall is located at 40 Searle Road. The venue is wheelchair accessible and air conditioned.

The seven program series is sponsored by the Westfield Bank, Easthampton Savings Bank, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Cultural Councils of: Cummington, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Westhampton and Worthington.



Randy Noojin will reprise Seeger, his Pete Seeger tribute, on Sunday, July 13 on the North Hall stage in Huntington.

Submitted photo



Shown are the graduates of the most recent Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Training Program. *Submitted photo*

Local firefighters graduate from State Fire Academy

SPRINGFIELD — State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine announced the graduation of 26 recruits from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Training Program.

Local graduates are Matthew Krassler of Huntington Fire Department, Todd Krassler of Huntington Department, Alan Whitney of Huntington Fire Department. The members of Call/Volunteer Recruit Class #119 graduated at the Department of Fire Services' Springfield cam-

pus.

"Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today's graduates are needed now more than ever," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "The hundreds of hours of foundational training they've received on nights and weekends will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely."

The Call/Volunteer Firefighter Recruit Training Program is unique in that it

delivers a standard recruit training curriculum, meeting national standards, on nights and weekends to accommodate the schedule of firefighters in suburban and rural areas. Making the training more accessible means more firefighters can participate and allows them more time to practice training skills with instructors.

The MFA, a division of the Department of Fire Services, has offered the program since 2003. More than 3,000 call and volunteer recruits have graduated since then.

Graduates have completed 240 hours of training on nights and weekends. Upon successful completion of this program, all students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications. In addition, they have the ability to become certified to the level of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations Level by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

OTAN VARGAS

from page 1

Western Massachusetts and has inspired the community to welcome the newest members of their Village. What started with one neighbor supporting one mother has expanded into a home visiting program covering 29 rural towns, a Parent Support and Education Program with drop-in support groups and a donation and distribution center that has given out over \$2 million worth of free

newborn supplies to thousands of families throughout New England. More information on their programs and ways to help or volunteer can be found by visiting their website <http://www.hilltownvillage.org/>.

Huntington's summer music series will be held on Thursday evenings, rain or shine, through Aug. 21. Concerts take place on the Town Green at the intersec-

tion of Routes 20 and 112. In the case of rain, performances will move into Stanton Hall, which is air conditioned and wheelchair accessible. Admission is free and the series is sponsored by the Huntington Community Events committee and supported by the Huntington Cultural Council. Baked goods will be available for purchase each week from local

non-profit groups. Upcoming performances will be The Brian & Vicky Show on July 24, The Hellcats on July 31, The Hotshot Hillbillies on Aug. 7, Even It Up on Aug. 14, with The Honig Brothers closing the season on Aug. 21. All the concerts will all run from 6:30-8 p.m. People may bring a lawn chair or blanket. Pets should be left at home.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

Can I switch to a taxi driver job without hurting my Social Security?

**Dear Rusty:**

I opted to draw my Social Security retirement benefit early and work part time. The company I work for has decided to pull me from field work due to my age and health. Although they are great keeping me at 20 hours per week running for parts and doing office work, I'm not sure how much longer it will last. I'm thinking of taking a taxi driving job to keep my income enough to live on. The way it would work, I would lease the cab for some amount of dollars per day, set my own hours to work and collect anywhere from \$1.40 to \$4.00 per mile, depending on what type of fare. My question is: how does Social Security look at that type of employment? Would I be held to the 15 - 45 hours a month standard? I could never come close to

making the \$1,200 to \$1,300 a month I need by working so little. Any advice is greatly appreciated.

Signed: Seeking Advice**Dear Seeking:**

If you go ahead with your plan to lease a taxicab instead of continuing your current employment, you would, in effect, be considered "self-employed" and would submit your income tax return to the IRS accordingly. Social Security would get your earnings information as reported to the IRS and it would be your net earnings from self-employment after deducting all your business expenses that is reported to SSA by IRS.

There is, however, a special rule which would apply to you in your first calendar year of self-employment while collecting early Social

Security benefits. Since, in your first year, some of your earnings would be as a part-time employee paying SS FICA payroll taxes, Social Security would first look at your earnings as an employee to see if you exceeded the annual earnings limit (\$23,400 for 2025).

Then, upon starting your self-employment, Social Security would look at the hours you spent performing "substantial gainful activity" (e.g., driving your taxi) each month and, if you spent more than 45 hours per month in that capacity, you would not be considered "retired," and thus, not eligible for Social Security in any month you exceeded that amount of hours.

If you earned less than the annual limit in total both as an employee and while self-employed, you would get benefits for all months of the year. But if you earn more than the annual limit, you will get no benefits for any month you exceeded 45 hours as a self-employed person. Again, this only applies during the first calendar year of self-employment - in the following year only your net earnings from self-employ-

ment would count toward the annual earnings limit.

In effect, SSA would use the hours-worked standard to see if you are truly retired or actually working. If the latter, they would withhold SS monthly benefits for any month you exceed 45 hours working while self-employed (up to and including December of your first calendar year of self-employment), and only if your total income (as an employee and while self-employed) exceeds the annual limit.

So, if your goal is to net \$1,200 - \$1,300 per month as a self-employed taxi driver, that would be well within the limits of the annual earnings test (\$23,400 for 2025 but changes yearly). But there may, or may not, be a reduction in your Social Security benefits during your first year of self-employment, depending on when you start as self-employed. Note that SSA will ask about your work plans when you apply, and if you expect to stay under the annual limit (working part time in both capacities), you should get full SS benefits. Just be careful to stay under the annual earnings limit for those col-

lecting early Social Security benefits. FYI, earnings from before your SS benefits started don't count toward the earning limit.

Note, too, that your monthly Social Security benefit will be actuarially reduced according to how far in advance of your full retirement age you claim SS. Whenever SS benefits are claimed prior to one's full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

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 informational purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

A self-sown surprise

I was pleased to come home from vacation and see the changes in my work gardens over 10 days time. It was astounding to witness the growth that many of the plants put on!

One other thing I enjoyed seeing was a few "volunteers" that had popped up here and there. Celosia, portulaca and my favorite, the cleome, had germinated in bare spots in the garden.

While most of these plants did not fit in to the current year's design and had to be removed, the cleome, better known as "spider flower," popped up exactly where I would have wanted it. In a month or so I will have dome gorgeous flowers in the center of a bed, providing height right where I need it.

Spider flower goes by the scientific name *Cleome hasslerana*. Older cultivars such as "Helen Campbell" and the "Queen" series top

off at an airy four or five feet tall, while the newer "Sparkler" hybrids are a bit shorter and bushier. Besides white, spider flower comes in pink, cherry and lavender.

It was given such a unique name because of the flower's long, slender stamens that remind one of spider legs protruding from the plant. The stamens hold the eventual seed pods a distance away giving them even more "popping power" once ripe.

As a child, I was drawn to the seed pods of this peculiar plant - if you waited until they were "just right" and gave them a squeeze, the seeds would fly everywhere. What fun!

This attribute gives the

plant tremendous "staying power" in the garden - in other words it pops up everywhere the following season! This can be a very good thing if you enjoy having the cleome around as much as I do.

Because cleomes are flower producing powerhouses they sometimes become exhausted by mid-summer; their lower leaves yellow and flowers start to fade. I always thought that if they were dead headed like other, more common annuals

were, maybe they would last longer into the season.

So, as an experiment I clipped the seed-pods close to the plant as soon as they began to form. Unfortunately, the overall form of the plant was altered - not for the better - and with little reward for my work. Then I began to search out what exactly cleomes need in order to thrive - perhaps if I met those requirements I'd have better luck.

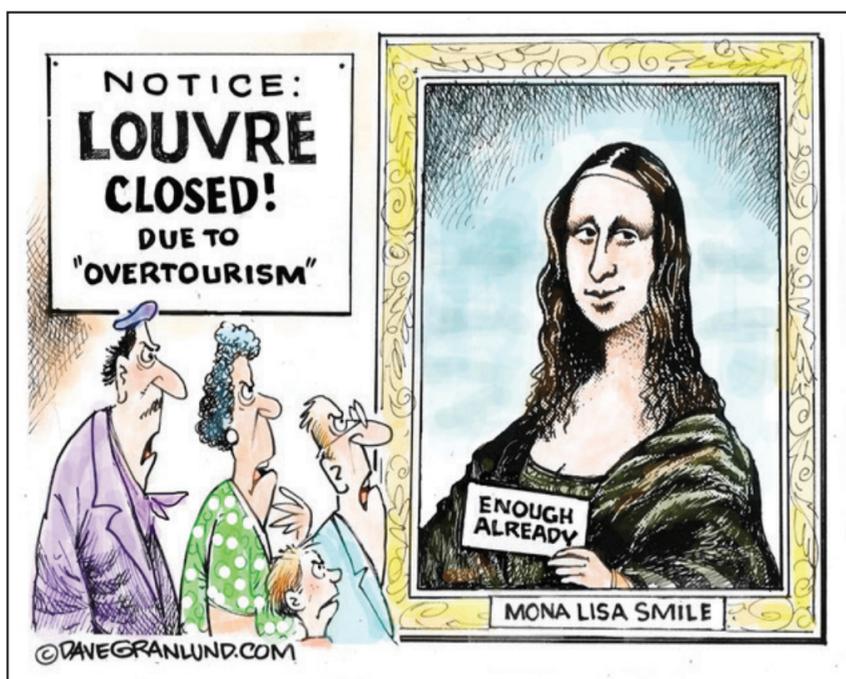
I had always known that cleomes prefer full sun and well-drained soil. What I didn't know was that they also like fertile soil and space away from one another. Regular doses of liquid feed are a must!

In the north, the cleome's habit of self-sowing doesn't become annoying, but in warmer areas it

can become weedy. Clipping the seed-pods as mentioned above would "nip this problem in the bud." Seedlings that develop from volunteers will likely be a blend color-wise of the plants you grew last year because they are cross-pollinated by insects.

I will have to wait and see what color my self-sown cleome seedlings end up being, but lucky for me the rest of the flowers in the garden bed are in pink and lavender shades and will blend perfectly the volunteers.

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.



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 2.

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Country Journal welcomes 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.

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BLANDFORD

MEETING

from page 1

Board reviews energy/solar/electrical expansions and more and takes control from the town to the state. The sole avenue for the town would be, according to Ferrera, once the requests for projects are on the EFSB docket for consideration, the town then has 14 days to file for intervenor status. Intervener status, when granted, would give the town, its residents and officials a legitimate, legal seat at the table to be part of the process to determine the outcome. Anyone can seek this status, not just town officials.

According to the EFSB website to obtain approval, "a proposed facility must demonstrate that it would provide a reliable energy supply, with a minimum impact on the environment, at the lowest possible cost." The NSTAR/Eversource project proposes a \$64 million expansion of the substations and Blandford is one. According to the petition filed with the EFSB June 24 the size of the substation would be doubled. Later in the meeting Jackie Coury said she would like to have them (Eversource) come in and "help me understand why you're expanding this quickly now."

Water Department

The board again met with the Water Commissioners who will develop a job description for a full-time water superintendent and discuss this with the board later this month. Fire hydrant invoices have been processed. The board approved Steve Grondin as Interim Water Superintendent.

The Water Department will replace the pavement for the Kana's driveway. Water Commissioner Brad Curry told the board, "... we looked at it and it was small enough and short enough that I think it's better than trying to patch it. I think the best thing we can do is just replace (the driveway)."

Highway

Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay reported on the work accomplished by the department, paving, helping with the water main repair on Russell Stage Road, maintenance goals, equipment listing with values and the upcoming August safety class for area highway departments which, he said, include Washington and Hampden. Having the class in Blandford saved his department the \$400 for the department to participate.

He anticipates Russell Road repair using Chapter 90 funds to help eliminate "sheets of ice."

Hultay shared with the board a 2022 listing of area highway department wage scales "and we're not even touching" what other towns paid then. "They were exceeding our pay (then) that we're getting right now," he said.

The department truck that Rene Senecal had the use of has been returned. June 30 was Senecal's last day and the board thanked him for his assistance.

Other business

Hultay also reported repairs his department made on one of the Transfer Station dumpsters.

The board acknowledged resignation letters from the Planning Board and Board of assessors from Paul Martin.

The board will review and discuss the town's Personnel Policy only a few sections at a time at upcoming meetings.

The board will meet with the existing members of the Planning Board to appoint another member until the next town election in June 2026. Richard Meczywor has expressed interest in this position.

The CEB just mailed out cards to residents voicing opposition to Battery Energy Storage System installations.

Mary Hall obtained grant for a historic marker

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – At the June 30 Select Board meeting, Mary Hull, a member of the Mercy Warren Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, has obtained through the Pomeroy Foundation, a grant for an historic marker honoring Jethro Jones, Blandford's Black veteran of the American Revolution.

His efforts on America's behalf were first found by the late Donald Shepard,

who spent many long hours going through records. According to Hull, the sign will be a cast aluminum plaque measuring 18 by 32 inches on a seven-foot pole. She said, "The people who put up the money for the sign prefer that it be placed at the junction of Blair Road with Jethro Jones Road so more people will see it."

Hull said that there is a website that tracks where these



Mary Hall

historic markers are located, "so if somebody is driving to Western Massachusetts and wants to visit historic markers, they'd be able to see it."

The sign, with the Select Board's approval will be placed in the town's right of way at the Blair Road and Jethro Jones site by the Highway Department. There are also specific instructions for placement.

Once the sign is in place, Mercy Warren Chapter will plan a dedication ceremony that will be open to the public.

The historic marker will read: Jethro Jones, CA 1733-1828. Black Veteran who served as a private from 1777-1783. Maker of Bolection Woodworking Planes. Died in Blandford, Mercy Warren Chapter NSDAR, William G. Pomeroy Foundation 2025. This will be the eighth historic marker in Massachusetts funded by the Pomeroy Foundation. There are 944 such markers nationwide.

White church gets new roof

BLANDFORD – The Historical Society received a grant to replace the roof on The White Church.

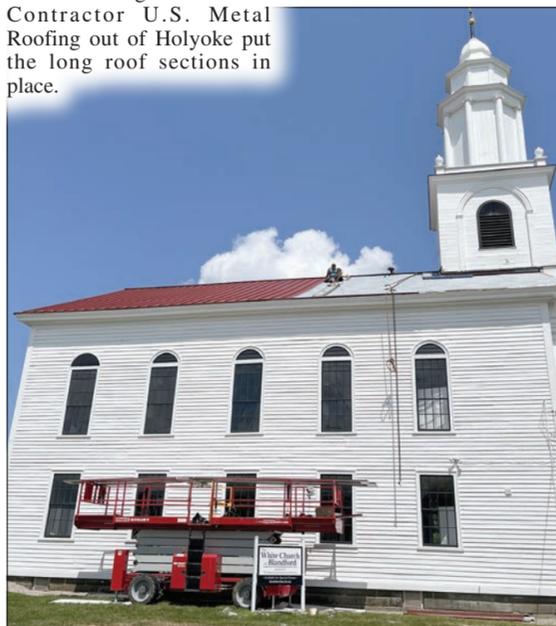
The work started just before the holiday weekend as the old roof was removed and the new underlying plywood and water sealant were put in place. The plywood was shunted to workers on the roof via a special lift that carried the large pieces to the top. From there, workers nimbly carted it to its location.

Installation of the red metal roofing came next. Contractor U.S. Metal Roofing out of Holyoke put the long roof sections in place.



A worker walks the plywood section across the roof.

Turley photos by Mary Kronholm



Metal roofing is shown in the installation process.



Sections of metal roofing are hoisted mechanically.

Send Us Your Autumn Event Information

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Date/Time _____

Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

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***Be sure to indicate "Autumn Event" in the subject line of your email.**

CHESTER



These children enjoy ukulele lessons at the Hamilton Memorial Library in Chester.

Submitted photo

Library announces events

CHESTER – The Summer Reading Program is off to a great start at Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St.

Lego with Tayo and ukulele lessons are at full capacity. Astronomy Week is the next Level Up at the library theme and includes

the Sci-Fi Book Club for middle schoolers and adults. Middle schoolers will meet at 3 p.m. to discuss: “Ruby Finley vs. the Interstellar Invasion” by K. Tempest Bradford and the adults will meet at 4:30 p.m. to discuss, “The Midnight Library” by Matt Haig. Extra cop-

ies of both books are available to check out prior and snacks will be provided. On Thursday, July 17 at 11 a.m., there will be a special space-themed story time. The library will be closed on Saturday, Aug. 2. People may visit at chester.cwmars.org.

SOUTH WORTHINGTON

Sevenars Concert Hall presents The Sullivan String Quartet

South Worthington On Sunday, July 20 at 4 p.m. the Sevenars Concert Hall, known as The Academy, 15 South Ireland Street, just off Route 112, present the Sullivan String Quartet.

This concert brings together four musicians in a beautiful program of Haydn (Op. 76, No. 5), Dvorak’s Cypresses (based on Moravian poetry to be shared with the audience) and Ravel’s stunning String Quartet. First violinist Laura Jean Goldberg (as founding member of the Cassatt Quartet) has been a prizewinner at Banff, Coleman, and Fischhoff competitions, has held residencies at Juilliard, Yale, Tanglewood, Caramoor, and performed international-

ly. Violinist Anat Malkin has toured internationally since age ten, playing her Carnegie Hall debut at age sixteen. She has soloed with orchestras worldwide and taught at international music festivals.

Violist Liuh-Wen Ting has been featured in festivals from Prague to Havana, premiered and recorded chamber and solo works for Naxos, Mode, Capstone and Albany, and others, as well as performing regularly with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s and other ensembles. Cellist Robert La Rue was First Prize Winner of the National Society of Arts and Letters Cello Competition, whose jury chairman was Mstislav Rostropovich, and has recorded for Arsis

Audio and North Branch Records.

This program continues the Sevenars tribute to Maurice Ravel, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth.

Admission is free, but donations are welcomed at the door (suggested \$20). Refreshments will be served. This 2025 season is made possible by generous individual donors, the volunteer efforts of Sevenars Directors, and by the LCC’s (Local Cultural Councils) of the following towns:

Amherst, Becket, Blandford, Chesterfield, Goshen, Huntington, Lee, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Westhampton, West Springfield, and Worthington.

MIDDLEFIELD

Library presents ‘Freedom to Read’

MIDDLEFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY – The Middlefield Public Library hosts Freedom to Read 70s Sit In on Wednesday, July 16 from 5-7 p.m.

Participants will discuss and share thought about

the top 100 books that have been challenged. They will play banned book Bingo and enjoy snacks and prizes. People will stand together for the right to read freely. They may borrow a challenged/banned

book. These include timeless classics to contemporary reads, these stories have sparked important conversations and championed diverse perspectives. People may wear their “hippy” outfit to this event.

WESTHAMPTON

Lounging for Literacy 2 attempts to break 2007 record, but falls short

WESTHAMPTON – On Saturday June 28, library lovers from Westhampton and many other towns gathered on the back lawn at Westhampton Public Library to break a world record.

Each participant came equipped with a book and a lawn chair. They were there to celebrate books, libraries and literacy as part of “Lounging for Literacy 2: The World’s Largest Gathering of People Reading in Lawn Chairs.”

The first Lounging for Literacy was held in 2007 as a fundraiser for the yet to be built new library. Westhampton had received a \$1.064 million grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The town of Westhampton was then charged with coming up with the remaining matching funds to build the new library. For a community of roughly 1,600 people this was no small task. Local residents banded together and got creative.

Lounging for Literacy was one of several fundraisers to raise awareness and support



A large group of people gathered at the Westhampton Public Library to participate in “Lounging for Literacy 2: The World’s Largest Gathering of People Reading in Lawn Chairs.”

Submitted photo

RUSSELL

Russell Public Library lists events

RUSSELL – Hours for the Russell Public Library, 162 Main St., are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3-7 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The library will be closed on Saturdays now through Sunday, Aug. 31.

On Tuesday, July 15 there will be a Parade of Community Helpers from 1-2 p.m.. This is a chance to meet the people who help to keep the community safe in Russell. People can check out their equipment and learn how they can help.

On Tuesday, July 22 from 11 a.m.-noon the Bruins Mascot Blades will celebrate Summer Reading at the Russell Public Library. The Boston Bruins have teamed up with libraries across the Commonwealth to encourage children and teens to keep reading over the summer. Russell Public Library is one of just 12 public libraries

selected to receive a special summer reading visit from Bruins mascot Blades.

Blades will join readers for a story, some game day fun and crafts. Participants can design and make their own Bruins fan button, take pictures at the ice rink photo station and more. A special library poster featuring Bruins player Jeremey Swayman will also be available.

Summer reading is one of the best ways to help children and teens avoid “the summer slide”

and maintain reading skills they’ve learned over the academic year. It also helps them grow the skills required for their next year in school. This Statewide Summer Library Program is sponsored by your local library, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the Massachusetts Library System and the Boston

Bruins.

The Russell Public Library invites all hilltown residents to join them for this special event. People may register by email rpldirector162@gmail.com, call 413-862-6221 and leave a message or come in and sign up at the library by Monday, July 14.

On Tuesday, July 29 exploring Main Street takes place from 1-2:30 p.m. Participants will walk along Russell’s Main Street stopping along the way to learn who the people are that make the town work.

Tweens and Teens are invited to Game Night every Friday. All games and snacks will be provided, participants are welcome to join anytime during library hours on Friday from 3-7 p.m.

Adults are invited to participate in the monthly Book Club on Tuesday, Aug. 12 from 6-8 p.m. The book will be “Heartwood.”

MONTGOMERY

Music in Montgomery offers weekly concerts

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

MONTGOMERY – The stage will be dark on Thursday, July 3 for Independence Day Observances, but the rest of the July calendar will be full.

Headlining this month will be Doug Pi and Friends, Jerry and Kara Noble, Ellen Redman and Last Night’s Fun and Larry Southard. Performances run every Thursday from 3-4:30 p.m. at Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road. On July 10, singer-songwriter Doug Pi will open the month with surprise guests. A driving rock/country guitarist, well known for his deep signature voice, he has performed recently with Doug Pi and the Harmonics at the O’s in Sunderland, Fishtails in Hatfield and Papa Bob’s in Becket.

Husband and wife team Jerry and Kara Noble take the stage on July 17. Jerry is a well-known pianist, guitarist and composer; his wife Kara joins him on bass. They are known for great music and stories across the decades. Ten years ago, they formed the Bob Sparkman (clarinetist) Trio and released the CD “Tunes in the Key of Three” in 2018. Currently, the couple manages their company Artist Tec, which supports creative people in sharing their art



Music in Montgomery

Submitted photo

through the use of technology. In describing their performances, the Nobles say, “We are the people our parents warned us about.”

Stop by for something different on July 24 as Ellen Redman and Last Night’s Fun perform Irish Music. The trio includes Sean Burke and David Clopp and they’ll play tunes from the Emerald Isle. Redman will cover Irish flute, whistles and concertina with the others on mandolin, Irish Bouzouki, guitar and vocals. The trio performs throughout the area and is a favorite with the Springfield Chamber Players. Individually, band members also play with Irish bands Banish Misfortune, Black Sheep, and Spencil Hill. When she’s not leading this Celtic trio, Redman

plays flute and piccolo with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra.

Rounding out the month will be Larry Southard on July 31. Word has it that singer/guitarist Larry Southard has been a regular featured performer at this summer’s Farmers Market in Otis. He also performs with Papa and Friends, a rock-country-folk band who include Lesley Friedman Rosenthal (violin, harmony), Terry AlaBery (Terrace Hall on drums), Mike Patoniac (bass and harmonica), and Andy Gordon (pedal steel and banjo). A favorite at Music in Montgomery, Southard can also be seen as a soloist or with the full band around Western Mass, including the Hilltown Memory Cafe, Papa Bob’s, and the Knox Trail Inn.

This series is co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and the Gray Catbird Pottery Studio. Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are accepted for the refreshments, with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen’s Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians who perform each week. This event is open to all who are interested.

For more information, people may call Dale Rogers at 413-875-5205.

for the new library project. The event was a hit, drawing 287 participants and creating a new world record category. Laurie Sanders, a local resident who came up with the idea with the help of her husband Fred Morrison, hoped that the event would go national and inspire other libraries to try to smash their record.

Lounging for Literacy “2” returned in honor of the new library’s 15th anniversary. In addition to the quintessential summer activity of reading while lounging outdoors, the event included book signings and activities with local authors: Jim Armenti, Phaea Crede, Tzivia Gover and photographer Dave Madeloni.

There were fun activities for children like lawn flamingo decorating and bookmark and zine making. Over 240 people attended and even though they didn’t break their previous record, a good time was had by all ages. It felt like a fitting way to celebrate the 15th year of a library that has become the beating heart of the town of Westhampton.

OTIS



This is an overview of the annual Otis Library and Country Fair held on July 5.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

Country Fair supports library

OTIS – The annual Otis Library and Country Fair on Saturday, July 5 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. supported the library's needs and programming.

Held on the Town

Hall Green, the event featured craft booths, Tony's Italian food, a bake sale, raffles, children's activities, Copsic truck, book and puzzle sale, jewelry and more.

Council on Aging to hold barbecue

OTIS – The Council on Aging All You Can Eat for \$10 barbecue is Wednesday, July 16 at noon at the COA at Town Hall.

Sarah the Fiddler will perform. Director Karen Yvon said, "Everyone has such a good time, not just eating, but visiting with

friends and neighbors, too." If anyone has not yet signed up, they may call the COA at 413-269-0100 extension 5. Payment must be received no later than Monday, July 14 during regular COA hours at the town hall on Monday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



FOOD TRUCK MAKES STOP IN OTIS

A food truck was in Otis Tuesday afternoon, July 2 from 4-6 p.m. adjacent to St. Mary of the Lakes on North Main Street. Offerings include mac and cheese and a variety of pulled-pork options. The food truck will be at the same place later this month.

Photo by Kronholm

GOSHEN

What is it?

GOSHEN – The above photos are artifacts found at the Williams Boltwood House, 2 Williams Drive.

Any readers able to identify these objects should email countryjournal@turley.com.

The Williams Boltwood Project, 2 Williams Drive, will hold a 1920s Garden Party and Speakeasy on Sunday, July 20 from 2-5 p.m. Rain date is Sunday, July 27.

There will be live jazz music by The Lark Jazz Trio, lawn and board games from the 1920s, mocktails in the Speakeasy and even a treasure hunt. Costumes are encouraged. This is fund-

ed by the Goshen Cultural Council, a local agency of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For more information, people may visit www.williamsboltwood.com/ events.



What is it? Readers that can identify any of these objects may send their answers to countryjournal@turley.com. These artifacts were found at the Williams Boltwood House.

Turley Photos by Deborah Daniels

HOLYOKE

E-Bike fire prompts lithium-ion battery safety reminder

HOLYOKE – An electric bicycle's battery pack exploded in a Holyoke apartment this weekend, injuring one person and displacing several residents, said Holyoke Fire Chief John Kadlewicz and State Fire Marshal Jon Davine.

"The lithium-ion batteries that power e-bikes and many other devices have caused serious fires when abused, overcharged, overheated or defective," said Chief Kadlewicz. "Please store, charge and dispose of them safely. And if you've got a larger device like a bike or scooter, it's especially important to store it outside if possible. If people must store it indoors, keep it away from doors, windows and stairways. These are your way out in an emergency and the way in for firefighters coming to help."

Chief Kadlewicz and State Fire Marshal Davine offered these safety tips:

Choose devices that are listed by an independent testing laboratory like UL or Intertek/ETL. Look for the lab's mark on the packaging and device.

Be sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home.

Read and follow the manufacturer's storage instructions.

Store lithium-ion batteries and the devices they power at room temperature whenever possible. Don't leave them in a hot car, in direct sunlight or in freezing temperatures.

Read and follow the manufacturer's charging instructions.

Always use the battery, cord and power adapter made specifically for the device. Aftermarket and generic accessories have been linked to serious fires.

Plug the charger directly into a wall outlet, not an

extension cord or power strip.

Don't leave a charging device unattended. Disconnect the charger from the outlet when the device is fully charged.

Charge devices on a hard stable surface such as a table, not a couch, bed, or pillow.

Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.

Discontinue use if the battery is damaged, if you notice an unusual odor, a change in color or shape, leaking or odd noises. If you can do so safely, move the device away from anything that can burn and call 9-1-1.

Don't discard lithium-ion batteries in the trash. Recycling is the best option.

You can find a recycling location at www.call2recycle.org/locator.

The Holyoke Fire Department was notified of a fire at 16 West Court St., on March 9 at 4:30 a.m. On arrival, firefighters observed heavy smoke coming from the middle of the two-story townhouse-style apartment building. All occupants were able to escape, but one was seriously injured and transported first to Baystate Medical Center and then Massachusetts General Hospital. Holyoke Fire Department fire investigators determined that the fire began with the lithium-ion battery pack in an electric bicycle and that the owner was attempting to carry it outside when it exploded.

State Fire Marshal Davine said that the incident was one of more than 170 fires linked to lithium-ion batteries since late 2023, when the Department of Fire Services launched a new tool for reporting these events.



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WORTHINGTON

ROADSIDE STAND WORKS ON THE HONOR SYSTEM



This roadside stand in Worthington sells bakery items and acts on the honor system. *Turley Publications photo by Deborah Daniels*

Library lists summer hours

WORTHINGTON – July 3. Thursdays from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. ad Saturdays from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.
 The Worthington Library Expanded hours are Tuesdays from 3-7 p.m.,

PITTSFIELD

St. Josphe’s Polish Picnic returns

PITTSFIELD – The St. Joseph’s Polish Picnic returns to the grounds of St. Joseph’s Church, 414 North Street on Sunday, July 20, continuing a 60-year tradition.

The Polish Picnic is one of the last ethnic festivals in the Berkshires and the event is expected to draw several thousand people. The picnic has free admission and is open to the

public.

A highlight of the Polish Picnic is the home-made Polish food prepared by St. Joseph’s parishioners. The food includes Pierogi, Kapusta, Golumbki and Kielbasa. American food and adult beverages will also be available for purchase.

Entertainment, consisting of Polish music, will once again be provided

by the popular Eddie Forman Orchestra beginning at 1 p.m. People may bring a lawn chair to relax and enjoy the music or get up and dance a polka. An outdoor Polish Mass will kick off the festivities at 11 a.m. The Polish Picnic will be from noon-5 p.m. KiddyLand will provide games and activities for children. Raffles will also be available for adults.

Film ‘Gaza’ to be shown July 16

PITTSFIELD – Café Palestina presents a screening of the 2019 film, “Gaza” on Wednesday, July 16 from 6:30-8:30pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church of

Pittsfield 175 Wendell Avenue.

Offering a view of Gaza before Oct. 7. Admission is free. Light refreshments and informal discussion will

follow. This film screening is co-presented by Berkshires in Solidarity with Palestine and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield.

STOCKBRIDGE

Berkshire Art Center welcomes two new board members

STOCKBRIDGE – Berkshire Art Center announces the appointment of two dynamic members to its Board of Directors: Emmy Award-winning editor Gideon Brown and creative strategist Angela Hall.

Their diverse talents and deep commitment to the transformative power of the arts make them invaluable additions to the organization at this pivotal time. As Berkshire Art Center embarks on a new chapter-

developing innovative initiatives and a three-year strategic plan Brown and Hall join a dedicated team working to meet the urgency of this moment. In a time marked by social tension and disconnection, the role

NORTHAMPTON

Annual Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival announces schedule

By Mary Kronholm
 Correspondent

NORTHAMPTON – Chairman and chief organizer of the Annual Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival Peter Langmore announced the lineup of activities for the July 19 event.

The festival will be again held at Look Park at 300 North Main St., rain or shine.

This is the second largest Scottish Festival in New England, and the only one in Massachusetts.

This year the festival will host the first ever Eastern United States Pipe Band Association Northeast Branch Amateur Drumming championships.

Opening ceremonies begin at 11:30 a.m. with Sabrina Asheim representing the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation singing the National Anthem; Julie MacNayr Pike will sing Flower of Scotland and Waking Finnegan will perform Scotland the Brave and Oh Canada with violin and bagpipe.

The Massachusetts Historical Swordsmanship will perform fencing demonstrations. Celtic music will be featured in the Ceilidh tent from 9:45 a.m.-8:30 p.m. This year featured artists



Peter Langmore is shown in tartan. *File photo*

include The Devil’s Brigade, Albannach and Waking Finnegan.

Local micro-brews will be available the Celtic Pub.

For the second year there will be Whisky Tasting with local spirits retailers.

All the usual features of Glasgow Lands Festival include Celtic Dancers, Highland pipers and drummers, a clan parade, sheep herding, Scottish dogs and other animals, wool spinners and weavers and traditional Scottish games. The Pioneer Valley Harpers’ Guild will play Celtic harp music and clans and genealogists will be there to assist in family heritage.

Scottish treats include scones, shortbread, birdies or hand-held Scottish meat pies.

The festival is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All festival; proceeds will benefit the River Valley Counseling Center and the Forum House.

For more information see the festival website, people may visit at www.glasgowlands.org or call 413-862-8095 or 413-862-4539.

There will be over 30 bands and 600-700 pipers/drummers. Honored guest are state Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, 1st Hampshire District and Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra, city of Northampton. The Saving Scottish Wildcats and the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism will also be at the festival.

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.





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of the arts in fostering community, self-expression, and well-being has never been more essential.

Gideon Brown, a long-time media professional, brings over 25 years of experience in television editing, having worked with major networks including CBS, HBO, Showtime and NBC. A graduate of Fiorello LaGuardia High School, Stony Brook University, and City College of New York (MFA, Film and Media Arts), Brown now lives in Great Barrington with his family. He has deep creative roots his grandfather was a Berkshire artist-align with the Center’s mission of connecting art with community.

Angela Hall joins the board with a wealth of experience in creative market-

ing, branding and innovation. As the founder of All Things Creative, she advises nonprofits and entrepreneurs in the arts, wellness and lifestyle sectors. Hall also teaches branding at Marist College, drawing on her diverse background in design, organizational development and storytelling to empower emerging creatives.

“We are thrilled to welcome Gideon and Angela,” said Mike Zippel, Board Chair. “Their expertise, energy, and passion for the arts will be invaluable as we continue to expand our board’s capacity and deepen Berkshire Art Center’s relevance and impact across the region.”

“At a time when the arts are playing an increas-

ingly vital role in personal well-being and community connection, we’re honored to welcome Gideon and Angela to our board,” said Laura Thompson, Executive Director. “Their creative insight and commitment to meaningful engagement will be instrumental as we shape new programs and strategies that respond to both the needs and the potential of this moment.”

Berkshire Art Center is a nonprofit community art center with a mission to make art accessible to all through hands-on learning, collaboration and community engagement. With locations in Stockbridge and Pittsfield, BAC offers year-round classes, workshops and events for youth and adults.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Hampshire Regional Middle School announces fourth quarter honor roll

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional Middle High School, 19 Stage Road, announce the fourth quarter honor roll.

Seventh grade academic excellence
Seventh grade students making academic excellence are Ava Boissonneault, Max Bonham, Ryder Cefalo, James Clemeno, Sunali Driver, Stephen Estelle, Caleb Falkowski, Aolfe Farrell, Kellan Flynn, Joseph Gagne, Lorelei Gilman, Anna Huard, Corbin Limatainen, Aurora Loud, Isabella Masi, Tyler Menard, Samantha Moreau, Camilo Ocampo, Scarlet Parent, Gianluca Pica-Smith, Claire Pickard, Madison Rida, Madeline Soares, Ashtyn St. Martin, Thomas Sullivan, Phoebe

Todd, Cyrus Tomsovic, Lucy Trombley, Addyson White and Eli Willard.

Seventh grade academic achievement
Seventh grade students making academic achievement are Emila Berrena, Quinn Bonham, Riley Bresnahan, Ivy Cardoza, Coleton Duda, Charlotte Dunn, James Farrar, Jacoby Hodges, Aubrielle Jarnett, Sienna Kalmakis, Abrahm Kellogg, Summer Kohl, Dorothy Li, Lukas Manley, Molly McColgan, Samuel Monette, Noah Moran, Mariah Pacinella, Olivia Pignatare, Payson Qackenbush, Lily Robak, Emily Sampson, Georgia Sugrue, Andrew Theroux, Colm Wilson and Bradley Woods

Eighth grade academic excellence
Eighth grade students making academic excellence are Elizabeth Barry, Elaina Bigda, Samantha Black, Gabriela Dybacki, Talya Eiseman, Trinty Fellows, Jackson Galenski, Aiden Goyette, Willow Gutermuth, Madison Johnson, Natalie Labrie, Anna MacLachlan, Felicity Mangeanelli, Noa Nabut, Teagan Noel, Damian Pasiut, Abigail Phelan, Shane Radon, Maeve Reynolds, Karolina Robak, Hazel Scully-Henry, Addison Thomas, Saide Wasiuk, Ava Westcott, Jack White and Tarlo Zerbach.

Eight grade academic achievement
Eight grade students making academic achieve-

ment are Carson Bisbee, Gabriel Carrasquillo, Stella Cubi, Raquele Denoronha, Sabella Donatelli, Jacqueline DuCharme, Joceyln Fasoli, Isabela Fini, Ryan Gravey, Lexie Gauger, Samantha Gay, Jaymes Goddard, Hayden Johnson, Savannah Judd, Saoirse Keane, Margaret Kugler, Sophia Lashway, Emma McDonald, Colton McVeigh, Connor Perkins, Katelyn Perry, Mackensie Provost, Benjamin Raymond, Kacey Reed, Avrianna Rodriguez, Holly Sampson, Sienna Steffenhagen, Emmett Stith, Nicholas Theroux, Anna Tompkins, Aurelia Tosh, Ethan White and Daniele Wolf.

COLLEGE NOTES

Dean College
Franklin
PRESIDENT'S LIST
Raeana Edwards of Westfield

St. Anselm College
Manchester, New Hampshire
Caela Scanlon of Easthampton, education studies elementary education major

St. Lawrence University
Canton, New York
Annika Jensen of Westfield, class of 2026 majoring in political science and global studies

Salve Regina University
Newport, Rhode Island
DEAN'S LIST

Camille Bruno of Westfield
Daniella Ferreira of Westfield
Delaney Marek of Westhampton
Gianni Soucy of Easthampton
Moirra Tirrell of Westfield

Siena College
Loudonville, New York
DEAN'S LIST

Rachel Bonfitto of Westfield
Kristin Jones of Westfield

St. Anselm College
Manchester, New Hampshire
Alpha Eta Mu Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi
Caela Scanlon of Easthampton

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

REGION

Grants fund announced for affordable housing internet upgrades

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Massachusetts Broadband Institute announced \$22,260,701 in grants to upgrade internet access for 15,793 affordable housing units across 54 communities in Massachusetts.

MBI provided the awards through the Residential Retrofit Program, an initiative that works with housing operators and internet service providers to upgrade broadband infrastructure in public and affordable housing properties. The projects will install modern fiber-optic cables in public and affordable housing properties that will increase residents' access to high-quality, reliable and affordable broadband service.

"Massachusetts is leading the nation in its efforts to improve internet access and adoption statewide," said Massachusetts Interim Economic Development

Secretary Ashley Stolba. "The Residential Retrofit Program is a key component of our strategy to upgrade broadband infrastructure statewide and will expand economic opportunity to residents by enabling them to access essential online tools."

"The Residential Retrofit Program is an ambitious effort to revamp decades-old wiring affecting low-income families and we're already seeing how much of an impact this work has had," said MBI Director Michael Baldino. "This round of Residential Retrofit Program grantees demonstrated a dedication to serving affordable housing residents and providing them with access needed to thrive in the digital age."

The award announcement is third and largest round for the \$82 million Residential Retrofit Program, which engages with housing operators and internet service providers (ISPs) across

Massachusetts. So far, the program has awarded \$16.7 million in funding, including \$6.3 million in December 2024 and \$10.4 million in March 2025.

The Residential Retrofit Program partners with ISPs that are committed to providing high-speed access at an affordable rate for residents. Beyond infrastructure upgrades, the Residential Retrofit Program is also supporting internet adoption in affordable housing through the newly launched \$8 million Retrofit Ancillary Grantee (RANGE) Program. The RANGE Program will provide grants to housing operators that have participated in previous rounds of the Residential Retrofit Program. RANGE grants will support the adoption of the newly retrofitted properties through digital navigation, digital literacy, tenant coordination and public space improvements.

Funding for both pro-

grams comes from the U.S. Treasury's Capital Projects Fund through the American Rescue Plan Act.

Listed below are the providers and public housing operators receiving awards in this round of the Program.

Aervivo Inc. (\$20,113,689 for 15,063 housing units)

Aervivo Inc.'s Connectivity Platform enables partners to deploy fiber-grade hybrid networks to small and large communities across the state. In its proposal for the Residential Retrofit Program, Aervivo Inc. offered income-eligible broadband plans of at least 100Mbps/100Mbps and up to 1000Mbps/1000Mbps within each property it serves. Aervivo will also offer multiple community benefits including devices for residents, digital literacy classes, free Wi-Fi in public areas and open access network options.

Local grant recipients are Hearthway Inc. in

Lee 108 units, Easthampton Housing Authority in Easthampton 177 units and Northampton Housing Authority in Northampton 117 units.

Comcast Cable Communications (\$1,100,200 for 485 housing units)

Comcast operates one of the largest fiber networks in the nation. In addition to an all-fiber backbone, Comcast has consistently added and expanded fiber throughout the portion of its network that directly serves customers. Comcast offered income-eligible broadband plans of at least 100Mbps/100Mbps for each property it serves. Comcast will also provide digital literacy or navigation and Wi-Fi in public spaces as community benefits.

Local grant recipient is Hampshire County Regional Housing Authority in Huntington 26 units.

RingSquared APC LLC DBA AccessPlus (\$1,046,812 for 245 housing units)

RingSquared APC LLC (DBA AccessPlus) will provide its project group with high-speed broadband service delivered over an end-to-end fiber network. In its proposal, RingSquared offered income-eligible broadband plans of at least 500Mbps/500Mbps within each property it serves.

Local recipient is Pittsfield Housing Authority in Pittsfield 245 units.

On May 7, MBI launched Round IV of the Residential Retrofit Program. ISPs may now participate in this current round, which is open through June 10.

Housing operators interested in applying to the next round of the Program may submit an expression of interest form by July 31. For more information, applicants may go to broadband.mass-tech.org/retrofit.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Chester Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing Monday, July 14, 2025 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM in the COA Room

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, the Wetlands Protection Act, the Chester Conservation Commission will review the following:

A Request for Determination submitted by Sage Engineering and Contracting, Inc, Bryan Balicki, for septic repairs to 11 School Street.

A Notice of Intent (WE# 131-0074) submitted by Tighe & Bond for Abbott Hill Road Culvert replacement. 07/10/2025

Worthington School District NOTICE OF DESTRUCTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS 2025

This notification is to inform parents/guardians and former students at the Worthington School District's intent to destroy the Special Education records of students who were no longer receiving Special Education services as of 2018. These records will be destroyed in accordance with the state law unless the parent/guardian or eligible (adult) student notifies the School District otherwise by SEPTEMBER 1, 2025. Special education records collected by the Worthington School District related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement,

or the provision of Special Education in the district, must be maintained under state and federal laws for a period of seven (7) years after special education services have ended. Special Education services end when the student is no longer eligible for services, graduates, moves from the district or completes their education program at age 22. After 7 years, the records are no longer useful to the district, but they may be useful to parents/guardians or former students in applying for Social Security benefits, rehabilitation services, college entrance, etc. The parent/guardian or eligible (adult) student may request records by calling: R. H. Conwell Elementary School at 413-238-5856 or emailing Emily Lak at elak@rh-conwell.org 07/03, 07/10/2025

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board (PB) of the Town of Huntington will hold a public hearing on **Monday, July 28, 2025 beginning at 7:00 pm** in Stanton Hall.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for 7:00 pm for the Special Permit Application of Rene Gonzalez representing T-Mobile from 10 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401, to install equipment cabinets and a generator on a 10' x 15' concrete pad inside the existing compound, and new equip-

ment and mounts on the existing Telecommunications Tower at 19 Basket Street, Parcel Number H2-4-0.

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

PLANNING BOARD TOWN OF HUNTINGTON 07/10, 07/17/2025

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) of the Town of Huntington will hold 3 public hearings on **Monday, July 28, 2025 beginning at 6:00 pm** in Stanton Hall.

The first Public Hearing is scheduled for **6:00 pm** for the Special Permit Application of Greyson Dice Lyon of 11 Circuit Road North, West Yarmouth, MA to operate a tattoo shop for select clients at property he co-owns at 25 Allen Coit Road, Huntington, Parcels # 508-83-0 & 508-40-0.

The second Public Hearing is scheduled for **6:20 pm** for the Special Permit Application of Charles MacDonald of 46 Sampson Road, Huntington, for renewal of his Earth Removal Special Permit at the same address, Parcel Number 506-28-0.

The third Public Hearing is scheduled for **6:40 pm** for the

Special Permit Application of Andrea McKittrick of 155 Pisgah Road, Huntington, to reopen the former Huntington Liquors at 21 Russell Road, Parcel Number H5-24-0.

All Special Permit Applications will be available to view by appointment in the office of the Selectboard during regular business hours after July 15, as well as at the Public Hearings.

See a separate Planning Board Public Hearing Notice for a Public Hearing the same evening for a new telecommunications carrier on the existing 19 Basket Street telecommunications tower.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS TOWN OF HUNTINGTON 07/10, 07/17/2025

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

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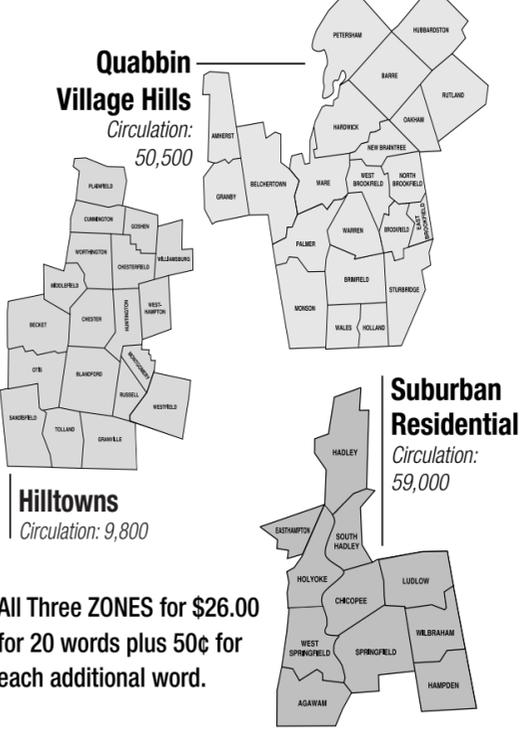
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OBITUARIES

Yvon "Ivan" Euclid Hebert Jr.

Yvon Euclid Hebert Jr., affectionately known as "Ivan," passed away suddenly on June 25, 2025. Born on Nov. 2, 1958, in Millinocket, Maine, Yvon lived a life full of warmth, laughter, creativity, and deep devotion to those he loved.



Later in life, Yvon moved to Phoenix, Arizona where he discovered a profound love for the desert and its tranquil beauty. He would gaze at the stars above the desert sky and capture their beauty through the lens of his camera with the same artistry he brought to songwriting and storytelling.

Yvon grew up in western Massachusetts, where he developed lifelong skills from heavy equipment operation and carpentry to precision work as a machinist. Music was his soul's companion; a gifted multi-instrumentalist, he often shared musical moments with family and friends.

To his grandchildren, he was lovingly known as "Baboo," a playful, silly, and joy-filled presence whose antics and games never failed to inspire laughter. Those who knew Yvon would all agree: he never met a stranger. With a quick smile and an infectious laugh, he had a way of instantly putting people at ease. Yvon was the kind of person who could walk into a room full of unfamiliar faces and leave with a dozen new friends.

His love for the outdoors brought him cherished adventures with his sons – hiking Mount Katahdin in Maine, exploring the Grand Canyon's Bright Angel Trail and venturing through the iconic parks of the American West.

He brought people together with stories, music

and a natural gift for making others feel seen and heard. To be around him was to feel joy; he was often the life of the party, cracking jokes, strumming a guitar or sharing a memory that left everyone in stitches.

Yvon was preceded in death by his father, Yvon Euclid Hebert Sr.; his brother, Ronald Hebert and his sister, Kathy Hebert. He is survived by his mother and stepfather, Carolyn and Dave Guirlanda; his sister Kim Thompson; his brother Robert (Ingrid) Hebert; his sons Jake (Louise) Hebert and Phillip (Caitlin) Hebert and his beloved grandchildren, Kennedy, Harrison, and Arlo. He also leaves behind a host of nieces, nephews and friends whose lives were brightened by his presence.

Cremation services are being handled by Chapel of the Chimes Mortuary in Glendale, Arizona. A gathering to celebrate Yvon's life and share memories will be held at a later date.

Elizabeth A. (Betty) Wheeler

Elizabeth A. (Betty) Wheeler of Dingle Road in Worthington, passed away at home on March 13, 2025.



husband of 60 years, Cortney. After the service, friends and family are invited to a gathering and sharing of memories at the Masonic Hall at 45 North St., Dalton.

Betty lived in Worthington for more than 60 years where she raised five children and later drove school bus for other area children.

There will be a graveside service on July 26 at 11 a.m. when her ashes will be interred at the Peru South Cemetery along with those of her beloved

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Worthington Fire & Rescue, 51 Huntington Road, Worthington, MA 01098 in recognition of their kindness and on-going service to the Worthington community.

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

DEATH NOTICES

HEBERT, YVON "IVAN" EUCLID JR.

Died June 25, 2025
Gathering to celebrate Yvon's life at a later date

WHEELER, ELIZABETH A. "BETTY"

Died March 13, 2025
Graveside service July 26 at 11 a.m. at Peru South Cemetery
Gathering following service at Masonic Hall, 45 North St., Dalton

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12				13		14			15				
16					17		18			19			
20						21				22			
				23		24				25			
26	27	28	29				30						
31							32						
33								34	35	36	37	38	
				39	40	41		42	43				
		44	45					46					
	47						48						
49					50				51	52	53	54	55
56					57				58				
59					60					61			
62					63						64		

CLUES ACROSS

- 50 percent
- Records electric currents
- Charlize Theron flick "Flux"
- More frosty
- Disfigure
- Sky color
- A thoroughfare in a town or city
- Actress de Armas
- Spend time in a relaxed way
- California peak
- Lodging option
- Small amount of a thing
- Expresses sorrow
- Keeps an ear warm
- Babies (Spanish)
- A conceited and self-centered person
- No seats available
- Pouches

CLUES DOWN

- Snakes do it
- Hormone
- The standard monetary unit of Turkey
- Fixed charges
- Electronic communication
- Artilleries
- "Strangers on a Train" actor Farley
- Burning
- Makes ecstatically happy
- Greek liqueurs
- Tropical Old World tree
- Someone who takes vengeance
- Style of cuisine
- Select
- Immunized against disease
- Old world, new
- Honorable title (Turkish)

CLUES DOWN

- Hip joints
- A place to bathe
- Evading
- Minute, one-celled unit
- Losing one's hair
- A country in W Africa
- One point north of northeast
- Pointed end of a pen
- Extreme
- Norse personification of old age
- Doctors' group
- Member of U.S. Navy
- Mens' fashion accessories
- A way to allow
- Gloomy
- Grads wear one person
- Between south and southeast
- Jaguarundi cat

CLUES DOWN

- Court case: ___ v. Wade
- Supervises interstate commerce
- Not divisible by two
- Twelve
- Commentator Coulter
- Encourage
- Plumbing fixtures
- Early
- One point north of due east
- King of Thebes
- Short-tailed martens
- Impose a penalty on
- Consort of Poseidon
- A way to lessen
- Brooklyn hoops team
- Female of a horse
- Do as one is told
- A way to prepare meat
- Unit of measurement

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Fill your mind with positive and motivational thoughts and you'll be much happier in the long run, Aries. It's easy to focus on negatives, but a change of perspective is liberating.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, someone might recommend you for a leadership position and you could be inclined to take it. This is something that is out of your wheelhouse, but you'll make the most of it.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, you have been making excuses for someone in your life in the hopes that the relationship could be salvaged. But the other person must make an effort as well.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Someone who understands you may enter your life, Capricorn. It may feel like you already know and understand this person, even though you have just met.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

It is possible that a lack of energy is affecting your ability to do the things that you normally enjoy, Taurus. Figure out ways to get more rest so you will not lack energy.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, trusting someone else right now is something you might find challenging. It could be because you don't trust your instincts. You'll have to find a way around these feelings.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you have been putting your goals aside due to overwhelming circumstances and general procrastination. Now is the time to get things back on schedule.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

It's possible that you might feel stuck with someone in a situation that is not to your liking, Aquarius. You can be a catalyst for change if you start taking action.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21

It seems your social skills have been less consistent than in the past, Gemini. Do you have a reason why you have been pulling away from others lately? Get back on track.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you haven't been available for some key people, and you'll find they've pulled away. You may miss their presence, but you can mend fences if you hope to.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

It's time to engage with the activities that you are passionate about, Sagittarius. There is never a "right" opportunity to get things started; you just need to take that first step.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

You are about to have a eureka moment, Pisces. Everything you have been fretting about will then fall into place. It will be some smooth sailing afterwards.

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

SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:

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

Fun By The Numbers

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

answers

V	A	E		S	S	H	S	V	S	6	7	4	8	3	9	1	2	5
H	V	E	R	D		S	E	L	S	2	8	1	7	4	5	6	3	9
E	B	V	E	S		V	V	V	I	L	L	E						
T	S	O	M	T		I	N	B	E	N								
				V	I	N	V	I	R	U	V	M						
G	N	I	D	V	B	H	R	E	O	P	S							
G	N	I	D	U	N	E	B	T										
		X	A	O					O	E	V	C						
				O	R	S	T	S	I	T	O	G	E					
		S	E	N	E	N	P	V	F	R	E	V	E					
		S	E	Z	I	G	O	L	O	P								
M	O	T	V	N	N	I	V	T	S	V	H	S						
E	Z	V	T	V	N	V			E	R	T	S						
E	N	T	R	H	V	M			E	I	C	I						
N	O	E	V	G	O	C	E		R	L	F	V	H					

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CHESTERFIELD

Chesterfield celebrates the Fourth of July



A young man leads a team of oxen in the annual Fourth of July parade in Chesterfield. *Turley photos by Deborah Daniels*



This float featured a moose.



No parade would be complete without an equestrian unit.

FLORENCE

Florence Bank presents three employees with President's Awards

FLORENCE – Florence Bank recently presented the 2025 President's Award to three staff members for exceptional service.

Established in 1995, the President's Award recognizes outstanding performance, customer service and overall contribution to Florence Bank. This year's award recognizes Brennan LaFlamme of Westfield, an IRA specialist in the bank's main office in Florence; Bill Olejarz of Longmeadow, an information security risk analyst, also in the main office and Katherine Ravenelle of South Hampton, teller operations manager in West Springfield. Their colleagues at the bank nominat-

ed them.

LaFlamme has six years of industry experience and has served as a teller supervisor and customer service specialist. Responsible for maintaining all IRA accounts and keeping up to date on regulations, he provides IRA trainings for customers and staff. Currently working toward a degree in cybersecurity at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, LaFlamme is active in the community, serving as a board member for the Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Holyoke.

With four years in the industry, Olejarz assesses cybersecurity risk to help protect sensitive data



Brennan LaFlamme



Bill Olejarz



Katherine Ravenelle

and systems, reviews vendor security and works with departments to support compliance and ensure security controls are in place to reduce threats. He is skilled at third-party risk management, regulatory compliance, cybersecurity and risk

reporting, security awareness training and cross-department collaboration. He holds a master's degree in cybersecurity management from Bay Path University, a bachelor's in business administration from Western New England University and an

associate degree in computer information systems from Springfield Technical Community College.

Ravenelle has 13 years of banking experience. She manages teller line operations to ensure quality service is provided while adhering to policies, procedures and security. She handles customer transactions, account openings and account servicing and is skilled at customer service as well as adapting to different markets and customer needs, branch operations, fraud prevention and detection.

Matt Garrity, president and CEO of Florence Bank, said, "We are very proud of

these three individuals who gained notice from their peers because they are courteous, hard-working and dedicated to their areas of expertise. Their contributions to Florence Bank allow us to provide the superior customer service for which we are known."

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



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