

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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BLANDFORD

Planning Board approves lot split

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The Planning Board approved a lot split for Laura and Gilbert Gregory on Chester Road at the Wednesday, July 15 meeting.

Their property is now divided into two lots, one five acres and the other nine acres.

There are two residents interested in serving on the Planning Board. There are two openings on the five-member board.

These are elected positions for a five-year term, except when appointed to fill a vacancy. Then the existing Planning Board members meet with the Select Board and appoint new members to serve until the next local election when they would be nominated at caucus and be on the ballot for a full term.

The board interviewed Cara Letendre and Ronald Racine for the positions.

Both were asked the same questions, which included the skills and qualifications they had for the post, what inspired them to apply given the unexpected nature of the board, the possibility of several meetings



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Planning Board member Kim Bergland, who has already signed, watches as Scott O'Connor and Chairman Greg Garfield sign multiple copies of the property for the Gregorys.

per month, site visits, town meetings., etc.

The candidates were asked to describe availability and level of commitment to this board.

Then their philosophy for dealing with difficult situations and or people that may come to the board. The final question was, “Due to the volatile nature of the town’s feelings and focus right now on the Battery Energy Storage Systems and solar projects, the board needs an

unbiased and objective viewpoint from all its members. Going forward, what does that look like to you?”

Based on responses, which included understanding the zoning bylaws, a desire to help, availability, ability to work with difficult people and issues, and firm acknowledgements for being able to see both sides of issues, the board voted to move both forward to appointed positions.

There was a question

about why Racine, who had been appointed last year had to go through the process again. The explanation was that the Select Board voted to appoint him through 2028 and that was incorrect. He was nominated at caucus, but did not accept the nomination, so will be appointed again through the next local election.

Current board members are Greg Garfield, Kim Bergland and Scott O'Connor.

HUNTINGTON

Select Board approves Carolyn J. Friedman grant to Hilltown Trust

At their July 15 meeting, the Huntington Select Board unanimously approved a Grant of Conservation Restriction that gives the Hilltown Land Trust a parcel of land in the town previously owned by Carolyn J. Friedman.

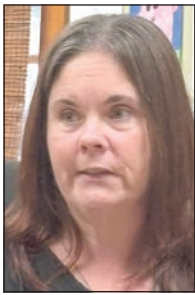
This Grant of Conservation exclusively preserves the nearly 68-acre parcel of land in a natural state in perpetuity. Land Conservation and Stewardship Manager Jess Applin presented the grant to the Board and explained its importance to the Hilltown Land Trust.

This parcel connects to conservation land in Chesterfield, Chester and Worthington and was described as a “missing piece of the Land Trust puzzle.” As such, it represents an important wild-

life corridor allowing for the movement of native plants and animals for the benefit of the land.

“The Friedmans have been working to keep that land intact for a very long time,” Applin explained. The parcel is located across from the 400 acre Pisgah Forest Preserve and is home to one of the largest Moose populations in the area.

The signatures of Selectmen Roger Booth (chairman), John McVeigh and Rob Drabiuk with notarization by Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin, marked the final step in a process that had already included approval by Carolyn Friedman, sole owner of the parcel, the Hilltown



Jess Applin

TRUST, page 3

BLANDFORD

Energy Informational update gives residents facts

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Select Board Chairman Jackie Coury and Select Board member Corinne Shartrand presented an Energy Informational Update for interested residents on Wednesday, July 15.

The session was bumped from 6 to 7 p.m. due to the Planning Board meeting set for 6 p.m.

Coury said that the meeting’s purpose was to give a “clear and factual” understanding of energy initiatives affecting the town, benefits and risks, what the state and/or the town can control and how the town’s interests have been represented.

Topics included the state’s Clean Energy Policy, a net-zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050; federal and state oversight of energy grid connections. Coury said everyone “needs to understand this process.”

For projects less than 25 megawatts, the permitting process stays local, but if locally denied the application can be brought to the state’s Energy Facilities Siting Board. Conservation review and building permits are local for all applications. Plus, the town can file for inter-venor status to have a

“voice at the table.”

Also discussed were the advantages and disadvantages of a Payment in Lieu of Taxes vs. usual property taxes of energy related projects.

New mandatory permitting regulations go into effect on Oct. 1 for Department of Energy Resources, but as of July 1 the town “may” offer applicants the opportunity to go through the new process.

The key to understanding “Why Blandford” rests with the existing Eversource substation and transmission infrastructure. There are large undeveloped lands in town and Coury said, “it is tough to turn down big amounts of money” from taxes.

The most important responsibility for the town is to “protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents.” Oversight is a challenge and the biggest authority according to Coury is the Building Inspector.

Other topics included Ch. 61A property, revenue, both existing and potential, public safety challenges, denying an application must have legal justification, towns that lost or won court cases.

UPDATE, page 5

BLANDFORD

Congressman Neal announces over \$1M in federal funding to Water Department

U.S. Rep. Congressman Richard Neal was in town on Friday, July 17, to announce the \$1,092,000 Federal Funding for the Water Department upgrades for treatment and distribution systems.

This grant was made possible through community project funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Small Underserved and Disadvantaged Communities Grant Program. Neal included funding for this project in the fiscal year 2026 spending bill.

This funding helps communities meet Safe Drinking Water Act requirements and supports public water system improvements to address

long-standing health-based water quality issues.

The funding will help bring the town’s water department into full compliance with all regulations. Neal said that water supply is a government responsibility as well as clean air and this comes with an investment.

His rhetorical question was what is most important to protect on Earth, and said, “Clean water is the most important.” Water Commission Chair Bradley Curry said, in expressing thanks and appreciation for the funding, “This will (enable) upgrades to pipelines, (water) storage, computer and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition” at the town’s

Long Pond water treatment plant.

Wright-Pierce Project Manager Michael McManus provided the example of the need to extend the water source pipe at Long Pond

deeper to resource consistent good water quality for the system.

Wright-Pierce, an environmental engineering firm, designed the operational system for the town.



Blandford Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera talks with Congressman Richard Neal.



District 1 Congressman Richard Neal is with Select Board Chair Jackie Coury and Water Commission Chair Bradley Coury at Blandford Town Hall on Friday, July 17.

Turley Publications photos by Kronholm

Senior Instrumentation Engineer, James Papadimitriou also attended.

Select Board Chairman Jackie Coury also recognized the benefits of the funding and acknowledged the town’s appreciation. She said, “there are lots of things that need to be done to keep our water good.”

McManus echoed her statement.

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HILLTOWNS

MassDOT announces upcoming roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces daytime and overnight bridge repairs, bridge painting and guard-rail repairs on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of Becket, Blandford and Russell.

All work is weather dependent and will take place at the following locations and times:

In Becket bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 westbound at mile marker 15.9 on the night of Thursday, July 23 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. the following morning.

In Blandford bridge painting will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 26.2 nightly now through the morning of Friday, July 24 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m.

In Russell guardrail repairs will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 31.0 to mile marker

29.0 now through Thursday, July 23 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to guide drivers through the work areas. Drivers traveling through the area should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. All scheduled 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.

Good Neighbor Energy Fund helps eligible residents

As warmer weather arrives and many Massachusetts households begin relying on air conditioners, fans and other cooling equipment, the Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund or MAGoodNeighbor, is reminding eligible residents that assistance remains available for those struggling to pay a home energy expense.

While the fund is often associated with winter heating bills, MAGoodNeighbor remains a resource for income-eligible households facing temporary financial hardship throughout the year.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Massachusetts residential electricity prices averaged 30.46 cents per kilowatt-hour in February 2026, compared to the national average of 17.65 cents, underscoring the continued pressure utility costs are placing on household budgets.

Summer energy use can create added challenges for

families already working to manage the cost of essentials.

The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund provides energy assistance to households that, because of a temporary financial crisis, cannot meet a month's energy expense and are not eligible for state or federal energy assistance programs.

Administered by The Salvation Army Massachusetts Division, the fund pays the energy provider directly for eligible households whose gross income falls between 60% and 80% of the state's median income levels.

"Summer can bring its own financial challenges for families, especially when higher temperatures lead to increased energy use at home and utility costs remain a concern for many households," said Justin Stearns, Chair, Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund. "The Good Neighbor Energy Fund is here for households that may not qualify for traditional assistance programs but are still facing a short-term crisis. We encourage anyone who thinks they may be eligible to learn more and apply."

For example, a household of four qualifies with a gross annual income between \$99,574 and \$132,764. During the current campaign year, eligible households may receive a \$400 grant toward a home energy expense, with payments made directly to the household's energy provider.

Now in its 41st year, the Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund has raised more than \$25.5 million and helped over 97,500 households remain safe and comfortable in their homes.

Residents and businesses interested in supporting the Fund can donate by using the green "Give the Gift of Warmth" envelope included in monthly energy bills, scanning the QR code found on the envelope, contributing through participating utility "add-a-dollar" programs,

donating online at magood-neighbor.org or mailing a check payable to "Good Neighbor Energy Fund" to: Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund, c/o The Salvation Army, 25 Shawmut Road, Canton, MA 02021-1408.

Massachusetts residents seeking assistance can visit their local Salvation Army Corps Community Center at salvationarmyma.org or call 800-334-3047 (area codes 339, 351, 508, 617, 774, 781, 857, and 978) or 800-262-1320 (area code 413). To learn more about donating, people may visit magood-neighbor.org.

The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund is available to any Massachusetts resident who, because of temporary financial difficulty, cannot meet a month's energy expense and is not eligible for state or federal energy assistance. Household income must fall between 60% and 80% of the state's median income levels.

CHESTER

Chester alumni and friends come home for reunion

CHESTER – As Chester High Alumni and friends gathered in the town, a picture of history, nostalgia, and community/school spirit developed.

The annual reunion and meeting always draws many people associated with the former Chester High and Gateway Regional Schools, including Chester residents who attended or graduated from Gateway after Chester High School closed in 1968.

This year's meeting was held on June 28 at the restored Chester Train Station with arrangements by the Chester Foundation.



Submitted Photo

William Giles and Nancy Pease Salvhus recently celebrated the 72nd anniversary of their high school graduation.

their scholarships renewed.

Scholarship Custodian Diane DeMoss noted that it was great to support so many alumni and all recipients are now considered life members of the association.

Association President Walter Boomsma noted that these reunions are "becoming as much a town event as a school reunion." Boomsma also pointed out that the Historical Society supports the occasion by offering special hours for alumni to visit the museum during reunion weekend. "I think this is proof that small-town America is alive and well, at least here in Chester," he said.

The Association reelected Walter Boomsma as President for his twenty-first year. Treasurer Robert Goewey announced his retirement. Boomsma noted, "Bob has been an amazing supporter of our association and has held every office except president, occasionally two at the same time." David Proctor was elected as treasurer. Kate Blanchard was reelected vice president and Donna Willadson Harris was reelected secretary.

The Association's Board of Directors includes Janice Leone Brown, Jack Young,

Jackie DeMoss Conklin, Brenda Budreau, Judy Olson, Bruce Cooper, Edith Whitaker, and Robert Broga. Scholarship Custodians are Diane DeMoss, Linda Casper and Annette LaMountain.

The Chester Foundation hosts the annual event at the restored Train Station. Dave Pierce, President, noted that the annual reunion is "one of our favorite traditions" and that the Foundation appreciates and supports more than the tradition of railroading in Chester.

Many alumni toured the recently acquired dining car, speculating how that might contribute to next year's event. The Association has already started planning for the next annual meeting, scheduled for June 26, 2027.

Those associated with or connected to Chester or Chester and Gateway Regional High School are encouraged to ensure that the Association has current mailing information. The Association also maintains a website (<https://chesterhigh.wordpress.com/>) and Facebook presence (@ChesterMassachusettsSchools) where alumni can gather information and post comments.

CHILDREN RECEIVE ACTIVITY BOOK



Submitted photo

Hamilton Memorial Library Director Tammy reads to the children from the activity book, "On the Nature Trail." They had a great program today, where the children received the activity book, "On the Nature Trail" which encourages outdoor fun and exploration. They will be focusing on this book and nature themed crafts for the next two weeks.

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HUNTINGTON

North Hall presents story cafe

HUNTINGTON – The North Hall Association, 40 Searle Road, presents its 2026 Historic North Hall Arts Festival with six free programs in July, August and September on the North Hall stage at 2 p.m.

The story cafe, a celebration of the Pioneer Valley's large, rich and enormously talented short-story authors, returns on Sunday, July 26.

Hosted by Raye Birk and Candace Barrett Birk, The Story Cafe combines the work of Pioneer Valley authors with the talents of favorite Pioneer Valley actors, to transport the audience through the magic of the spoken word into worlds of joy, discovery and connection.

This year's actors will again be Raye Birk, Candace Barrett-Birk and Ellen Barry. They will be reading stories by Steve Bernstein, D.M. Gordon, Peter Cooper Hay, Elinor Lipman, Ellen Meeropol and John Scheirer.

All performances are free; donations welcome. Upstairs seating is limited to the first 75 attendees. Doors open about 1:30 p.m.

People may visit the website at www.northhall-huntington.org for program updates. It is wheelchair accessible and air conditioned.

The six program series is partially sponsored by the Westfield Bank and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, through Cultural Councils of Chester, Cummington, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Westhampton and Worthington.

RecComm hosts blueberry picking

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Recreation Committee will host blueberry picking for Huntington residents on Saturday Aug. 1 from 10 am-2 pm at Jameson's High Meadow Farm, 410 Skyline Trail, in Chester.

People wanting to go must pre-register by emailing recreation@huntingtonma.us or calling Vicki at 413-667-0085, leaving name address and phone number. Participants should go to the farm first to pick up a bucket to pick and then return to the farm to get their blueberries weighed and pay.

Those who register get one \$7 discount per family. There will be a list of those who registered to receive the discount.

Rock 201 performs on the Town Green

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Rock 201 will perform on the Huntington Town Green (corner of Routes 20 and 112) on Thursday, July 23 from 6:30-8 p.m.

Music lovers are invited to bring their lawn chairs, but not their pets to enjoy this, and other, free performances every Thursday through Aug. 20.

Rock 201 is one of the busiest bands in Western Massachusetts. Their calendar is jam packed for the next four months including gigs at the Riverside Pub in Agawam, Knox Trail Inn in Otis, Incandescent Brewing in Bernardston and the East Mountain Country Club in Westfield.

The trio's (bass, guitar, drums and vocals) extensive song list includes classic rock 'n roll hits a multitude of bands including CCR, the Doors, Jimi Hendrix, ZZ Top, the Who, Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Marshall Tucker Band, Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones, among many others. Rock out in Huntington on July 23.

Each week, a different non-profit serving the hilltowns, will offer food for sale at the concerts. This gives the organizations an opportunity to both fundraise and "friend" raise, giving area residents a chance to speak with them and learn more about the things they provide.

The Southern Hilltowns Domestic Violence Task Force will be on the green on July 23rd offering both food for sale and information (for free).

Organized by the town's Community Events Committee, the show will go on regardless of weather. In the event of rain, performances will move into Stanton Hall, which is wheelchair accessible.

Still to come this summer is the Cover Daddys (mix of pop and classics) and Moon Hollow (folk/bluegrass/Americana/early jazz). Closing the 2026 season will be The 413s performing rock classics and originals.

The summer music series is sponsored by the Huntington Community Events Committee and Huntington Cultural Council. The Huntington Cultural Council is a local committee funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Stay "in the know" about things going on in Huntington by following the Huntington MA Summer Music Series/C. E. Committee page on Facebook.

BECKET

O-Tones concert takes place July 25

BECKET – On Saturday, July 25 at 5 p.m. Music Brings Communities Together with the O-Tones takes place at North Becket Park across from BW School.

The O-Tones, a 30-year swing, blues and soul/Motown group featuring Mary Witt vocals and bass, Ben Kohn vocals and piano and John Cabán guitar and vocals.

BUTTERFLIES AND BLOOMS



Turley staff photo
This Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly was photographed as it visited several daylilies.

TRUST

from page 1

Land Trust, and the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Applin explained that this land will not be open to the public and "permanently protected" signs will go up soon. Hikers, hunters, ATV's or mountain bikers cannot utilize it, but there is a network of trails for the public on land located across the street.

Completion of this grant with the Select Board's signature marks the end of three years of work on this effort. Restrictions now include protection of open space and the rural character landscape, soils and soil health, biodiversity, habitat connectivity, water quality, wetlands and climate change resiliency.

Also permanently protected is the "Indigenous Cultural Landscape" of the Nipmuc Tribe. Forestry that is consistent with the purposes of the trust will be allowed. Structures, sand and gravel extraction, waste disposal, motor vehicles, subdivisions and residential or industrial uses are permanently prohibited.

In other business, Booth presented a draft policy of Waste Oil Acceptance to Highway Superintendent Brad Curry and Board of Health Administrative Assistant John Bergeron, for review. Curry also presented updates to the board on highway equipment and upcoming projects. Booth noted that a washout fix on Sampson Road needs additional work and Curry promised to look into it.

Holding a second consecutive Wednesday meeting provided an agenda with no new business listed and allowed the board to tackle some persistent old business items. Motions included directing the Board of Assessors to follow general law regarding tax easements for disabled veterans, moving to post positions of a new part-time Police Chief and a full time patrolman for the town after determining hours and salary ranges for both positions; appointing Cyntas for inspections of town building fire alarms, fire extinguishers and emergency lights and accepting legal recommendations to the draft Bring Your Own Beer Policy for Stanton Hall renters.

The platform for the town website is phasing out and Drabiuk agreed to study alternative hosts.

Tabled were the renewal process for the cable television license with Comcast and geo permits.

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GUEST COLUMN

SOCIAL SECURITY
Matters
By Russell Gloor



Can my spouse file at 63 and then get half of mine when I later claim?

Dear Rusty:
My spouse is 63 and I am 65.
I am planning to take my Social Security benefits at age 70. Can my lower earning spouse take his own benefits now, and then -when I take my full benefits at age 70, can he then file for 50% of mine instead of the lower benefit he is getting because he claimed at age 63?

Signed:
Higher Earning Spouse

Dear Higher Earning Spouse:
Yes, your lower-earning spouse can take his benefits based on his personal lifetime earnings record at any time (i.e., age 63) and, when you later claim your own SS at 70, your spouse will be evaluated to determine whether he is eligible for a “spousal boost” based on your Social Security record.

But to be sure you are clear, if you claim at age 70, your spouse will not get 50% of your age 70 benefit amount.

Spousal benefits are always determined by comparing each partners’ Full Retirement Age entitlement and, if your spouse’s FRA entitlement is less than half of your FRA entitlement, your spouse will get a “spousal boost” to bring his monthly SS retirement payment up to what he is entitled to as your spouse.

The amount of the “spousal boost” would be the difference between his FRA entitlement and 50% of your FRA entitlement, which would be added to his own (age 63) SS retirement amount.

And that means that his total benefit amount would be less than half of your age 70 amount (less also than 50% of your FRA amount, because he claimed at age 63).

One caution for your spouse to be aware of: if he is still working and claims at age 63, he will be subject

to Social Security’s Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much he can earn before SS takes away some benefits.

The earnings limit for 2026 is \$24,480 (changes annually) and if that is exceeded, SS will take back \$1 of benefits for every \$2 he is over the limit. FYI, Social Security will “take back” by withholding future benefit payments, so he will not get his benefits for some months if he exceeds the annual earnings limit.

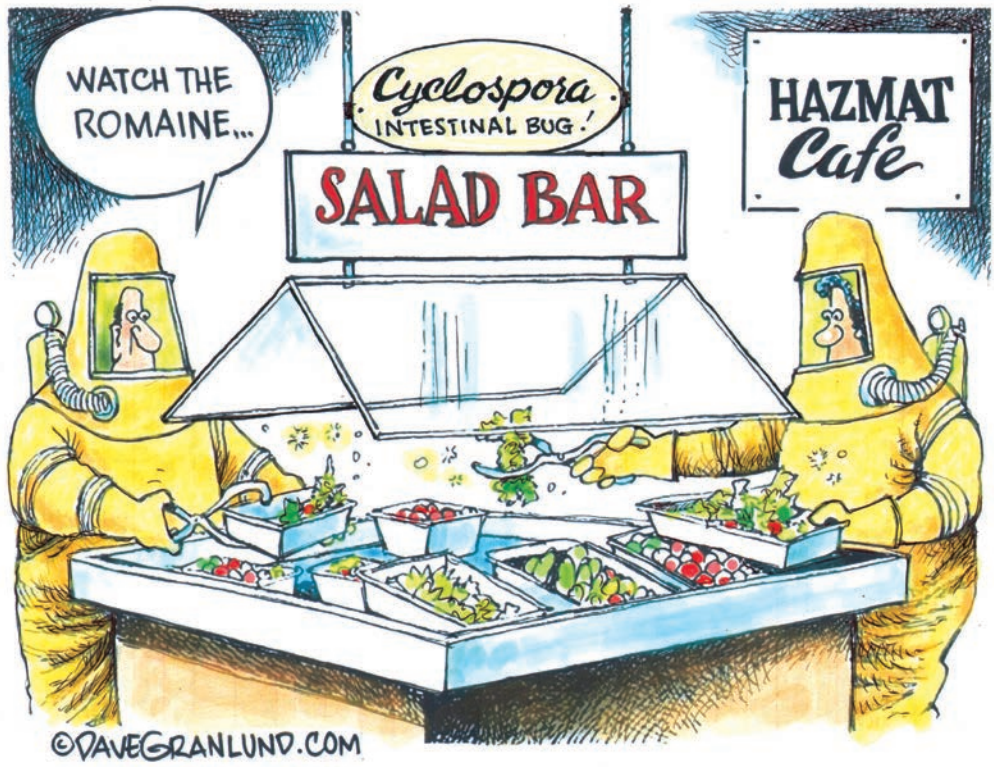
And if the annual earnings limit is significantly exceeded, your spouse could even be temporarily ineligible to receive SS benefits (until he either earns less or reaches his full retirement age, the earnings limit goes away when FRA is reached).

The only way your spouse can avoid both a reduced personal benefit and the annual earnings test limitation is to wait until his own Full Retirement Age to claim Social Security.

However, if he’s not working full time and needs the Social Security money sooner, then claiming at age 63 may be a good choice. In any case, he won’t get half of your age 70 amount.

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

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

Washing the elephant

The name Paul Rogers may ring a bell with some of my readers. Paul was a dear friend of mine, a mentor and acclaimed horticulturist who had amazing influence at Old Sturbridge Village, especially early on in my tenure.

He operated Stonehedge Gardens with his wife Barb in Charlton and for many decades wrote a regular column for the Worcester Telegram and Gazette. Paul also had a radio show, a weekly gardening Q&A on WTAG.

It was with his coaxing that I applied for and got this gig as the Garden Lady for Turley Publications over 20 years ago. He was very well known throughout Central Massachusetts, the Boston area and beyond.

Once I was in Bath, Maine, and to my disbelief someone mentioned that they knew Paul Rogers when I was shopping in a kitchen store of all places. But alas, I digress.

Paul and I would meet every other week at the Village unless he was traveling on some horticultural odyssey. Many times he and I would chat before we took our walks around campus to assess my beds.

I learned all about his trips in great detail and he got to know me pretty well, too. He always knew when I was “down in the dumps.”

During those periods, Paul would say, “you’ve got to wash the elephant.”

At first this made little sense to me, but after a bit I understood. When you are not feeling like yourself, you have to tackle a project, a big, elephant-like project, and afterwards you will feel better.

Of course, his projects were, and mine are, typically garden related.

So this weekend I tackled the iris and rose bed. Or shall I say the iris, rose and violet bed?

The violets were unwelcome guests in the garden, as were the borers, but we will get to that in a minute.

You see, I inherited this beautiful patch of blue-purple bearded irises when we moved to this house. For years it bloomed effortlessly. I divided it once a few years back and it was nice for awhile.

But this year blooms were sparse and rose suckers began to show up everywhere within the garden. Violet foliage crowded out the vertical spear-shaped iris leaves.

How was I to tame this mess and do it in the most efficient way possible? My approach may seem unconventional, but if I didn’t do it this way I might still be outside squatting in that very garden.

I took out the lawn mower and adjusted the height to the tallest I could, six inches. Then I mowed down the garden.

After that I got into the bed with a hand trowel and one scoop at a time, dug up the bed. It was easier than I thought, because the irises were in worse shape than I thought. They came up so easily because they were weakened by a bad iris borer infestation.

I had never seen anything like it. As I unearthed the rhizomes I smelled the rot before I found my first borer. To say it was gross was an understatement.

Each rhizome was lifted, inspected and cut back to healthy tissue. Two inch long borers were collected in a yogurt container for the chickens. They ranged in color from light pink to deep mahogany.

To think that I’ve been gardening for so long and had never seen one before! The violet rhizomes were also dug up and discarded, as were the unwanted rose runners and suckers.

Thinning out the apothecary rose will certainly help to dissuade powdery mildew from taking hold next year. This year it’s pretty bad.

Meanwhile, the irises were moved to a holding bed, also known as the vegetable garden, while I solarize the area they came from to kill off any violet seeds. I hope. They are notorious at self seeding.

I realize I took this project on a bit later in the season than I should have; my irises may not bloom next year, but it was then or never.

So now you have my “washing the elephant” story. And you know a little more about an amazing man who I miss so much and think of often, especially when I am in the garden.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.



by Roberta McQuaid

CHECK OUT ALL THE

 Publications

www.turley.com



By Julie Midura
Guest Columnist

Seventeen days into our 320-mile walk on the A.T. from North Carolina to Virginia, the sky broke open with unyielding

Twenty-four days of mountains, miles & memories on the Appalachian Trail

rain, drumming the leaves overhead and turning the trail into a torrent of rushing water. The squish, squish, squish of water-filled shoes became a constant melody for the next eight days as rain drifted through the forest... sometimes in sheets and sometimes in hushed murmurs.

Wet foliage accosted us at every turn, the branches leaning heavily onto the trail from the weight of SO MUCH unrelenting rain.

Every step became methodical. Our eyes looked down rather than ahead, focusing on the individual brushstrokes rather than the entire painting. Only then were we able to see the tiny little details we likely would not have noticed under sunny skies.

As we continued to walk through ever-present WET, our attention narrowed. We focused our eyes on a much smaller world-the one directly below our feet.

I crouched down to see a turtle shyly peeking its head out of its bright yellow lacquered shell. I squatted with my elbows on my knees in the middle of the path to watch a snail moving with ceremonial slowness as it crossed the trail on a rotting log, leaving a trail of silver in its wake. I stooped low to get a closer look at a vivid orange salamander with black speckles dusting its back and golden eyes staring straight into mine. I observed tiny creatures of our earth-who remain under cover on



Submitted photo

HIKING, page 5

Country Journal

We Want to Hear From You

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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.

OPINION

HIKING

from page 4

hot sunny days-come to life on the surface of the rain-drops.

For eight days in a row, we awoke in a tent and pulled on soaking wet socks and shoes. We gripped trekking poles with fingers that turned white and puckered by days end. But we also witnessed magical forest spirits and tiny details we would never have noticed on a clear day.

It rained overnight and was still spitting when we packed up our wet tent on our final day on trail. Before we started walking, we ended our morning prayer with, “And if it be your will, Lord, please let us end this hike under sunny skies.”

Several hours later, we reached the end of our journey at the Virginia border, completing our 320-mile walk from Fontana Dam, NC to Damascus, VA! We congratulated each other, snapped a few pictures, then continued hiking the final few miles toward the town of Damascus, where our friends were meeting us to shuttle us back to our car.

As we walked, the clouds finally began to loosen their grip on the sky. Minutes later, golden beams of sunlight spilled between the branches, as if an unseen hand was parting a curtain. The entire forest came alive with a radiance that could not be explained by mere sunlight alone.

I stopped walking, and with my pack on my shoulders, I tilted my face upward as the sun poured rivers of gold through the canopy above me. And suddenly, I was filled with an over-

whelming revelation-so powerful that I began to weep uncontrollably.

I wept not because the rain finally stopped. Not because the hike had been so hard. Not because we completed our goal. I cried, because in that sudden moment of awakening, I could feel God’s presence to the depths of my very soul. And I realized we had never walked a single mile alone.

God had carried us through every storm. Through every drop of rain. Every exhausting climb. Every windswept ridge. Every stretch of muddy trail. Through every ache and every pain.

He had not been waiting for us at the end. Had not been watching us from a distance. He had been walking right alongside us, filling us with His glory with every step, and carrying us when we could no longer carry ourselves.

My fatigue had concealed it. The rain and clouds had obscured it. My own determination had camouflaged it. But here, in a moment of complete clarity, with the sunlight warming my face, drops of water dripping from the leaves above me, and over three hundred miles behind me, I could see it clearly.

God had been with us in every step.

In the strength when ours failed. In the shelter that appeared when we needed it most. In the strangers who offered kindness. In the moments when we thought we had nothing left, yet somehow continued forward.

I stood among the trees,



while beams of golden light streamed through the branches above me in silent testimony. Stripped of my armor, I wept on my husband’s shoulder while he held me in his arms. And finally, every raindrop, every ache, every hard climb, every trial, and every mile... made sense.

We completed our goal, not because it was easy, but because we kept putting one foot in front of the other for 24 days.

We embraced a path that humbled us. Carried us. Challenged us. Stripped us down and built us up-physically, mentally and emotionally. Taught us resilience.

Showed us that we can sit in discomfort without becoming a casualty of it.

We tasted freedom. We inhaled silence. We knew peace.

The miles may be finished, but we will carry what they gave us as we step out of this wilderness and re-enter the world we left behind.

Onward!

Read more about Julie and Tom’s wilderness adventures on Instagram @more-thanthemountain



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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BLANDFORD

Correction



This photo is Pat Lucas. She dreamed up the Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival and spent a decade leading the Blandford Historical Society, where her legacy still endures.



In last week’s Barre Historical Society, the woman in this photo was incorrectly identified. It is Mary Powers she was incorrectly identified as Pat Lucas. Mary Powers, a Blair family author and researcher, showcased her work at BHS’s “Sugar House” at the Fairgrounds.

NEAL

from page 1

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera in a message to Neal said, “On behalf of the Town of Blandford, we are deeply grateful to Congressman Neal and his office for their support in help-

ing secure this important funding for our community.” Several town officials had the opportunity to visit with the congressman after the conclusion of his remarks.

UPDATE

from page 1

The Select Board is advocating for regional, state and federal assistance for communities hosting large energy projects. The presentation is available on the town’s website at town-ofblandford.gov.

WORTHINGTON

Route 143 construction continues

WORTHINGTON – Route 143 construction takes place through Friday, July 24.

Moraís Construction Crew #1 continues reconstruction of the roadway beginning at East Windsor

Road to Lindsey Hill Road, removing the existing black-top on the roadway.

Work hours Monday through Friday are 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; one-way alternating traffic will be in place

with traffic officers directing traffic.

The temporary traffic signal has been removed at the retaining wall work west of Bashan Hill Road and two way traffic has been restored

News, photo publication policy

As a community newspaper our focus has always been local news. While we try very hard to run upcoming events as a public service whenever space allows, space does not allow us to run an upcoming event repeatedly. Our policy is to limit publication of upcoming events to one article in advance of the event and, space permitting, a second brief reminder article the week prior to an event, and to run those articles in only one section of the paper, and not in multiple sections simultaneously.

All such public service announcements and photos are subject to space limitations and deadlines, therefore publication cannot be guaranteed. Whenever copy for the week exceeds allotted space, news copy will take priority, and public service copy is the first area to be cut. We also reserve the right to edit for style and space, and are under no obligation to print lists of sponsorships, or articles that arrive after deadline, unless time and space allows. **Deadline is Friday at NOON.**

Chester Baptist Church

Pastor Dan Herr
14 Middlefield Road
Chester, MA 01011
413-354-7743
Email: pastor@chesterbaptistchurch.org
Website: chesterbaptistchurch.org
Sunday School for all ages at 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship at 10:45 a.m.
Sunday Afternoon at 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Study and Prayer at 6:30 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Blandford

Pastor Tom Crouse
91 Main St., Blandford, MA 01008
413-269-5055
Sunday service 10 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Chester

Pastor Susan Borsella
334 Skyline Trail, Chester, MA 01011
Service with Live Music: 10 a.m. - Sunday
Coffee and Sweets Social: 10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

Rev. Jack Kraaz
4 North Main St., Williamsburg, MA 01096
413-268-7557
burgychurch@gmail.com • burgychurch.org
Facebook:
First Congregational Church of Williamsburg
YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCdyH1EA-fduamqHYeekxw5w
Office Hours: Tues. - Fri. 9 a.m. - 12 noon
Days and Hours of Services: Sun. at 10 a.m.

Hilltown Community Church

Dr. Robert Perreault, Senior Pastor
55 Main St., Russell, MA 01071
413-275-3232
Office: 413-862-3341
hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com
hilltowncommunitychurch.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/p/Hilltown-Community-Church-61580281487624/
Sunday Mornings 10 a.m.

Holy Family Parish

Rev. Ronald F. Sadlowski, known as Fr. Ron
5 Main St., Russell, MA 01071
413-862-4418
Office Hours: No set times.
Please call, leave a voice message or email: holyfamilyrussell.org
parish@holyfamilyrussell.org
Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m.
Sunday Masses: 8:15 a.m. & 11 a.m.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

New Boston Congregational Church

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

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050
(413) 527-3196
pvaglife@gmail.com
www.pioneervalleyag.org
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

Deacon Jerald Reinford
400 Huntington Rd., Russell, MA 01071
(413) 297-6037
Sunday worship at 10 a.m.
Visitors appreciated

Westhampton Congregational Church, UCC

Open and affirming. All are welcome.
Pastor Carol Smith
1 Tob Rd., Westhampton, MA 01027
(413) 527-4204
Sunday Worship at 9 a.m.
(Summer hours for July and August)

Russell Public Library lists events

Everyone is welcome to come to the library this summer to complete the Appalachian Trail as part

On Wednesday, Aug. 5 from 5-6:30 p.m. "Home Away from Home" for children is the final Summer Reading program. They will

Two steps parents/guardians must do by Aug.

The weekly interactive story time with Maggie Lufkin for children ages 0-4 years will resume in September.

Library has Chromebooks available

For more information, people may visit the Reference Desk.

Holyoke Community College announces Spring 2026 Dean's list

Krueger of Westfield
Elizabeth Sasha Kudrya
of Westfield, Autumn
LaFountain of Westfield
Abdullah Hassan Langrial o
Westfield, Aubrie Miche
Leary of Westfield, Arianna
Marie Levere of Westfield
Roza Lisniak of Westfield
Liana Lysenko of Westfield
Ariana Mata of Westfield
Tania C. Matos-Marcano o
Westfield, Kailey Minor o
Westfield, Evelina Mocanu
of Westfield, Fathima Reeha
Muhammadu Rizaan o
Westfield, Noah Patrick
Murray of Westfield
Michael Steffan Navarro Jr
of Westfield, Wynter Selene
Niedzielski of Westfield
Carly Ann O'Connor o
Westfield, Jakob Jay Osowski
of Westfield, Beyzanur
Ozbay of Westfield, Kyle
Allen Philleon of Westfield
Chloe Amelia Phillips o
Westfield, Amy Paige Pilecki
of Westfield, Jared Ritter o
Westfield, Aamylie Marie
Roman of Westfield, Ange
Rosa of Westfield, Jadalyne
Marie Rosario of Westfield
Chloe Theresa Rosario o
Westfield, Jordyn Josephine
Sanders of Westfield, Dishana
Eve Santiago of Westfield
Ashley Jean Savaria o
Westfield, Noelle Elizabeth
Seale of Westfield, Ivan
Alexandrovich Seleznev o
Westfield, Owen Sheaffer
of Westfield, Kristene
A. Sporbett of Westfield
Lucas Stefanik of Westfield
Alvina Sychev of Westfield
Matthew Vinces of Westfield
and Karina Yantsevich o
Westfield, Ishetia Rose Black
of Westhampton, Ryan David
Brooks of Westhampton
Stephen Testori o
Westhampton, Geoffrey
John John Gougeon o
Williamsburg, Noah Robert
Millis of Worthington
Lionel Nunez of Worthington

Beethoven concert on Aug. 2

Decorated as Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, an Honorary Fellow of the Academic Chapel at the University of Toronto, he has performed widely throughout the world, including major appearances at the Konzerthaus in Vienna, the Barbican Centre in London, the Philharmonics in Munich, the Stockholm Concert Hall, the Concertgebouw in Rotterdam, and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

For more information on the program, people may visit <https://www.sevenars.org/august2>.

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Colleges and universities list graduates

Quinnipiac University
Chloe Govoni of Blandford,
*Bachelor of Science in health science/
physician assistant*
Benjamin Shannon of Otis,
*Bachelor of Arts
in film, television and media arts*
Landon Richard of Russell,
*Bachelor of Science
in health science studies*
Jeffrey Fish of Williamsburg,
*Master Business Administration
in management science*

Vermont State University
Emma Bean of Montgomery
Bachelor of Science in nursing
Dasha Ciloci of Westfield
Associate of Science in nursing
Megan Culp of Easthampton
Bachelor of Science in health science



PITTSFIELD

Downtown Pittsfield offers free dance

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. welcomes back Rhythmscape, a free outdoor summer dance series that transforms Downtown Pittsfield into a vibrant gathering place where music, movement and culture come together.

The series will take place on Dunham Mall, 100 North St., on select Sunday evenings from 6-8 p.m. throughout the summer.

Schedule of instructors are Sunday, July 26:Sandra Zarate teaches Zumba®; Sunday, Aug. 9 Soul Line Dancing with Berkshire Sole Society founded by Erica Shrader; Sunday, Aug. 23 Luana Dias David teaches Salsa; Sunday, Sept. 6 Brazilian Day with the Quilombo Experience and Sunday, Sept. 20 to be announced.

Each Rhythmscape event features a different dance style led by talented local instructors, inviting participants to experience traditions and rhythms from around the world while celebrating the rich cultural fabric of the Pittsfield community. From Latin and Brazilian rhythms to other global dance forms, every session offers an opportunity to learn, connect, and move together.

Open to all ages and experience levels, Rhythmscape encourages everyone, whether stepping onto the dance floor for the first time or returning as an experienced dancer, to join in the celebration. No partner or previous dance experience is required.

More than a dance class, Rhythmscape is an invitation to build community. This series is supported by Downtown Pittsfield, Inc., Wandering Dance Festival and Mill Town Foundation.

For more information, people may visit downtownpittsfield.com or call Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. at 413-443-6501. Food vendors will be on site on select Sundays to be determined.

Berkshire Lyric presents two concerts

Berkshire Lyric presents its chamber choir, Ubi Caritas, in two choral concerts to raise money for Berkshire County food pantries on Sunday, Aug. 2.

The identical concerts will take place over the course of the same afternoon on Aug. 2 starting with a 3 p.m. concert in St. Mark’s Church in Pittsfield, followed by a 5 p.m. concert in St. Joseph’s Church on Elm Street in Stockbridge.

There is no admission charge, but a free will offering will be taken to directly benefit food pantries that are supported by these parishes in Berkshire County.

This year is the 14th season for Ubi Caritas, and in that time the chorus has raised over \$17,000 working with a dozen local faith communities to support local food programs. The singers comprising Ubi Caritas are also part of the 120 voice Berkshire Lyric Chorus that will be singing Faure with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood on Friday, Aug. 7.

For more information about the Aug. 2 concerts, people may visit www.BerkshireLyric.org or call 413- 298-5365.



Berkshire Lyric’s chamber choir, Ubi Caritas, presents two concerts to raise money for Berkshire County food pantries.

First Fridays Artswalk happens Aug. 7

PITTSFIELD – The First Fridays Artswalk in downtown Pittsfield continues its five-month season May through September on Friday, Aug. 7 from 5-8 p.m. as part of the city of Pittsfield’s First Fridays at Five.

Participating venues on Friday, Aug. 7 include Clock Tower Artists, Framework by Downtown Pittsfield, Inc., Hotel on North, Indie Readery and Records, Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, O.U.R Resurge, Sanctum Gallery, Solarium Plant Shop and the Soda Chef.

People may download the Downtown Pittsfield App in the App Store or on Google Play to follow a virtual walking tour of art on your cell phone.

They may join the Clock Tower Artists at 75 South Church St. on Friday, Aug. 7 from 5 -8 p.m. to explore fresh artwork, meet the makers and celebrate summer creativity.

Stroll the historic third floor and connect with over 20 professional artists working across a wide range of mediums. People will enjoy original artwork, creative conversations and a warm, welcoming community of artists in the heart of Pittsfield.

Artists include Karen Carmean, Deborah H. Carter, Lucie Castaldo, Joan Palano Ciolfi, Randy Foulds, Marion Grant, Nava Grunfeld, Caroline Kelley, Mollie Kellogg, Eric Korenman, Bruce Laird, Lisa Loustaunau, Mark Mellinger, Linda Petrocine, Sally Tiska Rice, Ilene Richard, Audrey Shachnow, Stanley Singer, Ariel Smith, Sharon Walthew, Stefanie Weber and Carmel Wilson.

CATA’s “I Am a Part of Art” will be on view at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, 28 Renne Avenue, now through Friday, Aug. 28.

“I Am a Part of Art” is one of the largest annual exhibits by artists with disabilities in the country-featuring paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures and more by over 250 artists with disabilities from across Berkshire County and Columbia County, New York. In their works, created in Community Access to the Arts’ year-round programs, CATA artists express their unique perspectives and draw us into their world, revealing the power of art to nurture inclusion and connection.

On view at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, now through Aug. 28 on Wednesday through Friday from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and by appointment. CATA artwork is available for sale and supports CATA artists.

Complementing the exhibition are sacred Tibetan sand paintings by Tenzin Wangchuk, a former senior monk and artist for His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Presented by Sanctum Gallery, a program of Healing Hearts Sanctuary, the exhibition will also feature artist talks, guided meditations, music, and other community programs throughout the month. Admission is free, and all are welcome.s

Berkshire Art Center will host “Kid Artwork Across All Ages, from the Summer in the Studios Program at Berkshire Art Center” at Framework by Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. located at 437 North St. There will be an opening during the Aug. 7 First Fridays at Five from 5-8 p.m.

Hotel on North, 297 North St., will feature Autumn Phoenix Photography for the month of August.

Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and First Fridays Artswalk will feature Maru Domínguez as the August “Art in the Park” artist. Maru will present a special “Faces of Pittsfield Community Art Experience” for the Aug. 7 First Fridays at Five from 5-8 p.m.

“Art in the Park” is supported in part by the Feigenbaum Foundation. “Art in the Park” is supported in part by a grant from the Mass Cultural Council, and a grant from the Pittsfield Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Westhampton Conservation Commission

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 Douglas and Jane Deihl for the installation of a new septic system at 10 West Shore Rd. on Pine Island Lake in Westhampton, Mass.

The meeting will be held on August 5, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Town Hall in Westhampton, Mass.
07/23/2026

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Town of Middlefield
188 Skyline Trail,
Middlefield, MA 01243

Separate sealed BIDS for the construction of selective building demolition, installation of a new building electrical service and transfer switch, relocation and upgrade of existing electrical panel to 200 amps, installation of additional electric outlets, lighting and emergency lighting, construction of an access door to the crawlspace, construction of a new two-storey addition to include a new lift to the second floor, the installation of insulation in the crawlspace, construction of four roof systems to protect exits and accessible ramp, installation of new windows and related work included in the plans and specifications. The estimated project cost is \$725,000. There will be a base Bid for work and four Add Alternates included in the Bid documents. The add Alternates will include:

Add Alternate 1: Identify the cost to paint the exterior of the building. See Spec. Section 0911 Exterior Painting.

Add Alternate 2: Identify the cost to furnish and install the electrical generator as shown on the Electrical Plans.

Add Alternate 3: Identify the cost to furnish and install a new interior electrical panel (near the furnace room, lev.1), as shown on the Electrical Plans.

Add Alternate 4: Identify the cost to furnish and install 8 new single bulb lights in the Crawl Space, as shown in the Electrical Drawings.

Bid documents will be available commencing on July 23, 2026, by contacting the Town Assistant Administrator, Mark Doane at middlefield.assistant@gmail.com or by calling the Middlefield Town Hall at 413-623-2079 ext.2. Bids can also be picked up and dropped off at the Select Board Office in person, from the Middlefield Administrative Assistant on Mondays from 9:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Wednesdays from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Fridays from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. The Select Board Office is located in the Town Hall, 188 Skyline Trail, Middlefield, MA 01243. There is no cost for the first set of Bid Documents. A Pre-bid Site Visit will be held for all interested parties on July 27, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. at the front entrance to the Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, Middlefield, MA 01243. The Filed Sub-Bid deadline and opening is Monday Aug. 3, 2026, at 2:00 P.M. at the Middlefield Town Hall located at 188 Skyline Trail. Completed Sub-Bids and General Bids can either

be dropped off at the Middlefield Administrative Assistant Office located in the Middlefield Town Hall, 188 Skyline Trail, Middlefield, MA in sealed, marked envelopes or they can also be submitted electronically by email to the Middlefield Town Assistant Administrator, Mark Doane at middlefield.assistant@gmail.com.

Filed Sub Bids will include Painting and Electrical and must be received at the office of the Selectboard, Town of Middlefield or submitted by email to Mark Doane at middlefield.assistant@gmail.com until 2:00 P.M. on Monday, August 3, 2026. At that time, Filed Sub Bids will be opened and read. A copy of the results will be sent to all Bidders that have requested Bid Documents.

General Bids must be received at the office of the Selectboard or submitted by email to Mark Doane at middlefield.assistant@gmail.com by Monday, August 10, 2026, at 2:00 P.M. General Bids will be opened on Monday Aug. 10, 2026, at 2:00PM at the Middlefield Town Hall located at 188 Skyline Trail. Review of Bids will take place immediately after Bids have been opened. The project will start immediately after award (approximately August 12, 2026) and shall be completed no later than April 5, 2027.

Note: Massachusetts Prevailing Rates are required to be paid on this project. Questions can be directed to Curt Robie, Member, Select Board by calling 413-623-2079, 413-374-2082, or by email: middlefield.cdr@gmail.com.
07/23, 07/30/2026

NOTICE OF DESTRUCTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS

Notice is hereby given that Gateway Regional School District Office of Pupil Services will be destroying the special education records of students who graduated or left school in 2019. If you or your child received special education services and you wish to obtain the special education file, please call 413-685-1017. Records will be destroyed on August 4, 2026.
07/16, 07/23/2026

Town of Huntington Invitation for Bid
Replacement of Garage and Personnel Entry Doors at Highway Garage

The Town of Huntington seeks sealed bids from qualified contractors for the replacement of garage and personnel entry doors at the Highway Garage. The complete invitation for bid package is available by emailing bids@huntingtonma.us or at the Town Administrator Office located at Huntington Town Hall, 24 Russell Road in Huntington by appointment. **Sealed bids must be received by Thursday, August 6, 2026 by 2:00 p.m.** by mail to Town Administrator, Town of Huntington, PO Box 430, Huntington, MA 01050; or delivered to the Town Administrator office. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids if it is deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Huntington Selectboard will be the contracting authority.
07/23/2026

Town of Huntington Invitation for Bid
Heavy Equipment and Operator Services for FY2027 Highway, Water, and Sewer Projects as Needed

The Town of Huntington seeks sealed bids from qualified contractors for heavy equipment and operator services for FY2027 Highway, Water, and Sewer projects as needed. The complete invitation for bid package is available by emailing bids@huntingtonma.us or at the Town Administrator Office located at Huntington Town Hall, 24 Russell Road in Huntington by appointment. **Sealed bids must be received by Thursday, August 6, 2026 by 2:00 p.m.** by mail to Town Administrator, Town of Huntington, PO Box 430, Huntington, MA 01050; or delivered to the Town Administrator office. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids if it is deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Huntington Selectboard will be the contracting authority.
07/23/2026

Town of Blandford Request for Bids

The Town of Blandford is accepting bids for the Porter Memorial Library Addition and Renovation Project. Project documents available 7/8/2026 through www.biddocs.com. Please reference project B26-3Z6X. All bidders must use Bid-Docs.com for all bidding processes.
07/16, 07/23/2026

TOWN OF WORTHINGTON NOTICE OF PUBLIC TREE HEARING

Notice is hereby given pursuant to MGL c.87, s.3 concerning the cutting of public shade trees. A public hearing will be held on **Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 6:30 PM** at the Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road, Worthington, MA.

The purpose of the hearing is to allow public input regarding a request by the Town of Worthington to remove numerous trees on Lindsay Hill Road beginning approximately .4 miles west of Ridge Rd./ Buffington Hill Rd. intersection and continuing west approximately .4 miles to the top of the hill.

Work on this section of Lindsay Hill Road is needed to improve drainage and to facilitate year-round maintenance. Trees to be removed are marked with white paint and are of various species ranging in size between 2” and 28”.

07/23, 7/30/2026

Town of Chester Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing RESCHEDULED
Monday, July 27, 2026 from 1-4 PM,
Town Hall-COA Room

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

RDA submitted by Lynn Proulx, 187 RT. 20, Septic replacement

RDA submitted by Denis Proulx, 170 Johnson Hill Road, Septic replacement

RDA submitted by MassDOT Hwy Division for work on RT. 20
07/23/2026

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ARE NOW ONLINE

1

Email all notices to notices@turley.com

2

Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.

3

Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts’ public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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Inquire at **Girly's Grill, 1315 Park St., Palmer, MA 01069** or call **413-284-0005**.

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FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICER.
\$2740 to \$32.21 per hour based on qualifications. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**

Deadline to apply is 8/6/2026 .
Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The Town of Huntington is seeking a

PART-TIME CHIEF OF POLICE.
\$37,500 - \$50,000 yearly salary based on qualifications. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**.
Deadline to apply is 8/6/2026.
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advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development " HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

OBITUARY

Theresa Anna (Novelli) McLoughlin, 33

Theresa Anna (Novelli) McLoughlin, 33, of Conway, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, July 13, 2026. She was born in Springfield to Theresa Schiappa on Jan. 11, 1993. Raised in Chester, Theresa was very proud of her hometown. She graduated from Smith Vocational Agriculture High School and earned a Bachelor's Degree in education from Mildred Elley School in Pittsfield. She later worked as a teacher's aide at Conway Grammar School. Theresa met and fell in love with Pete McLoughlin and the two were soon married on Sept. 19, 2015. Together, they made their home in Conway, where they raised two beautiful children. She loved the excitement of watching the P27



Offroad Racing Circuit and was especially proud of earning her black belt in Tae Kwon Do as a teenager. Theresa enjoyed spending time outdoors, especially hiking, fishing and swimming. She also loved turning up the radio and dancing to her favorite songs in the kitchen with her children. Above all, she was a devoted mother who cherished time with her children and family. Theresa will be deeply missed by all who knew her. Theresa is survived by her loving husband, Pete McLoughlin of Conway; her children, son Peter "PJ" McLoughlin and daughter, Raelleigh "Rae" McLoughlin both of Conway; her mother, Theresa Schiappa of Hatfield; her brothers, Kevin Kennedy of Winchendon, and Joey Novelli and his wife Rachel of Agawam; her

fur baby, dog and companion, Ripley; several aunts, uncles, cousins and dear friends. Theresa was predeceased by her grandparents, Joseph "Pop" Schiappa and Bernice "Nana" (LaBrie) Schiappa, who lived with Theresa and Pete until their passing in 2022 and 2023. Calling hours will be Saturday, Aug.1, 2026, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Drozdal Funeral Home, 120 Damon Road, Northampton. A Celebration of Life will be at a later date and at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to support the future of her children, Peter and Raelleigh McLoughlin. Donations may be payable in their names to Easthampton Savings Bank or to the family. For more information or to leave the family a personal condolence, please visit DrozdalFuneralHome.com.

DEATH NOTICE

McLOUGHLIN, THERESA ANNA (NOVELLI)

Died July 13, 2026
Calling hours Aug. 1 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Celebration of Life will be at a later date



In loving memory of
William M. Baker
(8/31/1986 – 7/17/2004)

Billy, I can't believe another year has passed without you. Know after all these years, you will never be forgotten. Oh, how I love you so much. We miss you dearly. Give Kenny and Dad big hugs, I know they'll be hugging you too.

Love, Mom

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES
Mar 21/Apr 20
How you respond to a situation matters more than how quickly you react. Interactions with others will feel more charged than expected, but will be effective.

CANCER
Jun 22/Jul 22
What you prioritize this week will shape how stable you feel, Cancer. Focus on those things that matter to you the most and give them your full attention.

LIBRA
Sept 23/Oct 23
Tell others what you need without conforming to what you think they want you to be, Libra. You may feel pulled between your needs and theirs. Stay clear about what works for you.

CAPRICORN
Dec 22/Jan 20
It is important to be direct with others about your limits, Capricorn. Identifying what you are willing to do and what you are not can help you and others to achieve your collective goals.

TAURUS
Apr 21/May 21
Slow down so you can see what actually matters. You may feel slightly off if you move too quickly; give yourself time to respond to those seeking your help.

LEO
Jul 23/Aug 23
Leo, when your messages are clear and direct, others will understand you more easily and this will keep discussions moving forward. Clarity comes from simplicity.

SCORPIO
Oct 24/Nov 22
Set clear boundaries around your time this week, Scorpio. Your work will be consistent and controlled. This is how to find success.

AQUARIUS
Jan 21/Feb 18
A shift in your perspective this week helps everything make more sense to you, Aquarius. You may feel tension, but take a moment to think before responding to others.

GEMINI
May 22/Jun 21
You may want to say yes to something quickly, without giving it ample time for consideration. Do not jump into things without careful reflection. It's hard to backtrack.

VIRGO
Aug 24/Sept 22
This week you may feel a pull between staying comfortable and going deeper into something that has been on your mind, Virgo. When you stay grounded, your decisions will be easier.

SAGITTARIUS
Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, plans will move better this week when you keep them simple and flexible. Progress will build when you have a clear and manageable plan.

PISCES
Feb 19/Mar 20
You may be pulled to either avoid a topic or resolve it quickly, Pisces. Progress builds when you stay present and define what's actually beneficial.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Listen to

5. Presents

10. A type of guitar

14. Actor Idris

15. A citizen of Iran

16. Pretentiously artistic

17. Harness

18. Diamond weight measurement

19. "Better Call ____"

20. Fervent support

22. Male cat

23. Jewish spiritual leader

24. Disposed to venture or take risks

27. A way to nail

30. Cool!

31. Women's ____ movement

32. "Losing My Religion" rockers

35. Step-shaped recess

37. A princess can detect it

38. Tractor-trailer

39. Leslie and Leon are two

40. Color at the end of the spectrum

41. Lines where fabrics are sewn

42. Dodgers great Hershisier

43. Floor covering

44. Traveled aimlessly

45. Rocker Stewart

46. Body art

47. Congressman (abbr.)

48. No seats available

49. Breaks apart

52. Hand gesture

55. Ballplayer's tool

56. Sword

60. Baseball team

61. Upper bract of floret of grass

63. Italian Seaport

64. Mars crater

65. Tube on a shoelace

66. U. of Miami mascot

67. South American nation

68. Video game series "Max ____"

69. Upper body part

32. Widens a hole

33. Eurasian wheat

34. Act incorrectly

36. "Be back later"

37. Al Bundy's wife

38. Ocean

40. Large root eaten as a vegetable

41. Units of subjective loudness

43. Music genre

44. A way to drench

46. Popular hot beverage

47. Silk-like cotton fabric

49. Rumanian city

50. Come back

51. Vaccine developer

52. Canadian law enforcers

53. Wings

54. Observational comedian Bill

57. Small fry

58. ____ Clapton, musician

59. Take a chance

61. Semi-liquid food for babies

62. Consumed food

CLUES DOWN

1. German courtesy title

2. Ancient Greek personification of mercy

3. Jewish calendar month

4. Family of long-legged frogs

5. Photo

6. Delivered a speech

7. Lute used in Indian music

8. Decorated

9. Cease to stand

10. The bottom layer

11. Member of a Semitic people

12. Part of a ticket

13. Defunct monetary unit

21. Challenges

23. Body part

25. Tell on

26. By way of

27. Shady green alcove

28. Egyptian city

29. ____ and flowed

answers

K	O	E	N	E	N	A	V	P	U	E	V	P
S	I	B	I	T	E	L	G	V	I	R	M	E
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6	1	2	4	8	7	3	9	5	6	2	5	1	4	7	8	9	6

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!

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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

Hilltown Hikers climb Shatterack Mountain on Fourth of July

Shatterack Mountain in Russell, is where the inspiration for the Hilltown Hikers was born.

Saturday on the great Fourth of July, the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers gave praise to all who were involved in making this great country 250 years old on this day. They braved the humidity and trekked up to one of the most spectacular rocky cliffs in the Hilltowns.

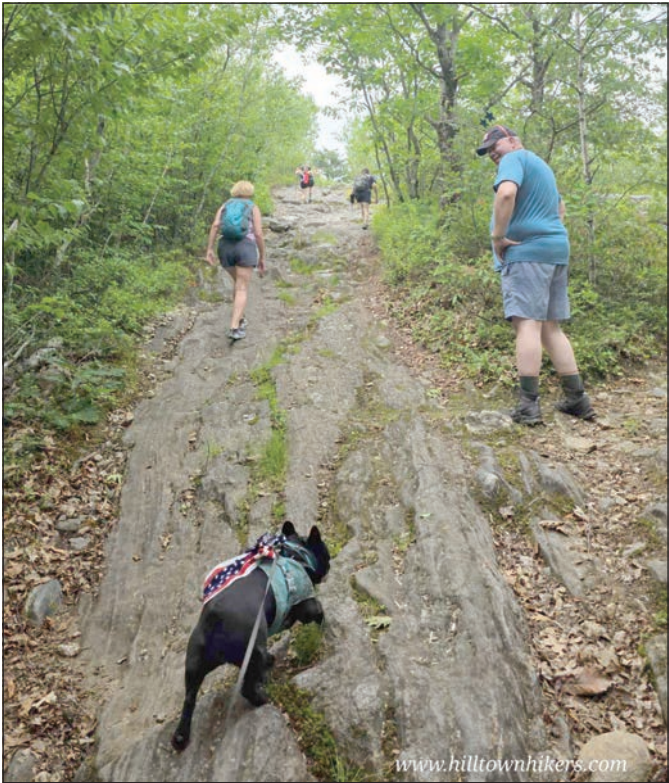
The y eyed views to Blandford and the White Church, down to the villages of Russell and Huntington, also Mount Nero, Holiday Hill, Turtle Bend Mountain and East out the Westfield River Valley to the Pioneer Valley.

A steep short climb from Lower Russell Road where there is space for a few cars makes this a manageable hike in the summer when the road is open. Shatterack Mountain sits in the Westfield River Valley next to it's neighbor Tekoa Mountain.

Both were used by Native Americans before Hilltowners settled here as spectacular viewing points and tremendous fishing down in the river.

The old Native American Footpath ran across both mountains and as the stories tell, were the traveling routes from the Connecticut River to the Mountains in Washington.

The group rang their Westfield River Races cow bells to take part in the National Freedom Bell ringing and remembered how lucky all are to be free in this great country.



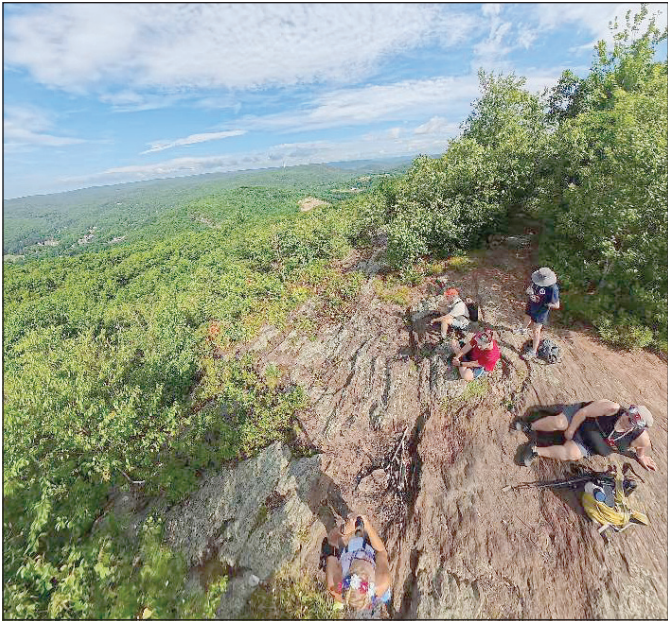
Submitted photos
It is a short, but steep climb to the summit of Shatterack Mountain.



The Western Masschusetts Hilltown Hikers display a 250th Years of Freedom banner on Shatterack Mountain in Russell.



The group looked to the West toward Holiday Hill and Turtle Bend Mountain.



The Hilltown Hikers reached the rocky summit.

MONTGOMERY

OTIS

COA announce upcoming events

OTIS – Council on Aging Director Karen Yvon announced the upcoming July programs.

The regular COA events will continue on Mondays and Wednesdays. Exercise class is every Monday at 10:30 a.m. at the COA center at Town Hall. Haircuts will be available on Monday,

Mat Yoga is every Saturday at 9:30 and Chair Yoga is every Thursday at 10 a.m.

Wednesdays are Food Pantry days from 9-11 a.m. Be sure to pick up your items on time.

Haircuts are available on Monday, Aug. 3. People should call the 413-269-0100, extension 5 to make an appointment.

Wednesday, Aug. 5, the Tri Town Health Blood Pressure clinic is set for 9:30-10:30 a.m. Also on the same day is a trip to the Log Cabin to see the Kenny Rogers Tribute, which is all sold out.

The Out to Lunch group will go to the Golden Peacock in Westfield on Thursday, Aug. 6. People should call to reserve a spot at 413-269-0100, extension 5.

Craft fair happens despite weather

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

OTIS – The Town Hall Lawn in Otis center brought out local and not so local crafters, vendors and visitors all to benefit the Otis Library and Museum on Saturday, July 18.

There were books for sale, jigsaw puzzles, maps, original works of art, craft supplies, baked goods and food from Antonio's Kitchen for a full day of entertainment.

For those seniors who are in the process of downsizing, one of the crafters offered something to do with old crystal, the stuff no ones' kids want today and that was fanciful yard art.

Selected pieces of glass, glassware, candlesticks, juicers, colored glass or clear – everything works to create something suitable for yard or garden.

Lori Chudzik and Terry Shea, both Big Pond residents originated the yard art with old glass craft. They say it's been a hit.

Something not usually found at such events was The Light Source Center

table from West Hartford, Connecticut. The organization offers meditation sessions at the Otis Library. For more information about meditation sessions, people may call the library at 413-269-0109.

Russell woodcraft-er Mike Koivisto displayed his walking staffs, Native American flutes, various whistles and cribbage boards.

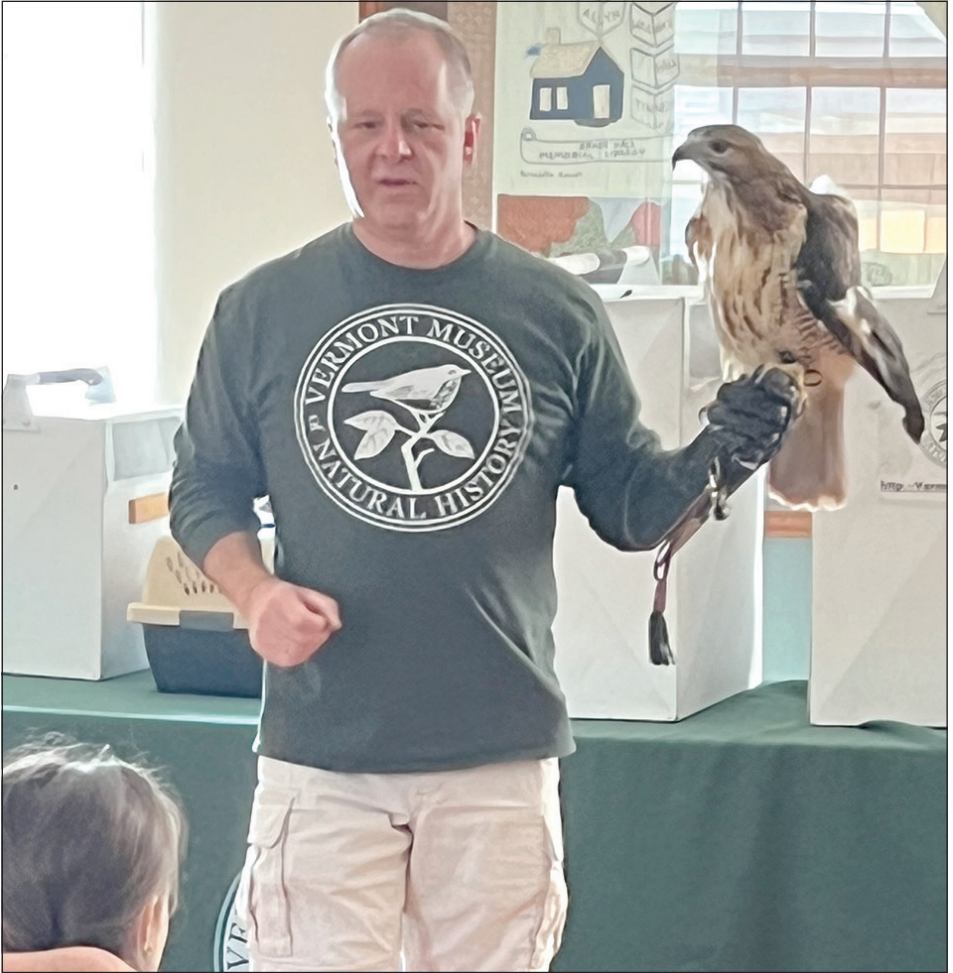
The rain did not prevent a full parking lot or crowded grounds.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm
Lori Chudzik and Terry Shea, old glass and crystal crafters display their work.

Crowds are on the Town Hall lawn for the craft fair on Saturday, July 18 to benefit the Otis Library and Museum.



The Vermont Museum of Natural History also brought this owl to visit with children and their families.



A staff member addresses a group recently while holding a hawk.

Submitted photo