

“When summer opens, I see how fast it matures, and fear it will be short; but after the heats of July and August, I am reconciled, like one who has had his swing, to the cool of autumn.” Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Ashfield, Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Dalton, Easthampton, Florence, Goshen, Granville, Hawley, Haydenville, Hinsdale, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Peru, Plainfield, Russell, Southampton, Washington, Westfield, Westhampton, Windsor, Williamsburg, Worthington

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BLANDFORD

NextEra Energy Resources request restriction

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Representatives of NextEra Energy Resources met with the board to request approval of their proposed conservation restriction on their solar field property on Otis Stage Road.

Springfield Water and Sewer Commission will hold and benefit from the CR, conserving approximately 50 acres of Miller Swamp, which abuts other conserved land.

The CR is required by the Mass Department of Environmental Protection storm water mitigation and will permanently protect a wetlands area. According to NextEra the “overall benefits” include storm water and flood plain protection, water quality and supply, wetlands, habitat and biodiversity protection as well as open space protection. The property will not be subdivided as there is no road frontage

or vehicular access. No money is changing hands and SWSC does not own the land just control of the CR, according to NextEra.

Chair Jackie Coury said that town counsel will review the documents and asked NextEra to return for the next meeting, Aug. 17, for a vote, and said, “If there is a problem,” the town will let them know.

Blandford Historical Society Director Jane Rohman brought the board up to date on the Second Annual Ghost Walk which will be in the Hill Cemetery on Saturday, Oct. 3 from 2-4 p.m.

Surplus itmes for sale
Coury spoke on the surplus items on the stage in the gym. These items are for sale and residents will have the first opportunity to purchase. The caveat to those departments with offices in Town Hall is to be sure items are

REQUEST, page 6

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Students return Aug. 31

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Schools in the Gateway Regional School District will reopen for students in grades 1 – 12 on Monday, Aug. 31.

There will be no school on Friday, Sept. 4 and Monday, Sept.7, so families can enjoy a long holiday weekend and youngest students can return to the school routine over two short weeks.

Students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten will have an orientation on Wednesday, Sept. 2 and start school on Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Superintendent Melissa Matarazzo explained that they have added kindergarten students to this later start date for several reasons. It will allow more students to participate in orientation, have time to conduct screenings of students. who may have moved in over the summer.

PreK and kindergarten teachers can connect with the kindergarten students to support their successful transition, she said.

“We are so excited to welcome our students back in just a few weeks,” said



Submitted photo

Schools in the Gateway Regional School District reopen for students first grade through 12th.

Dr. Matarazzo. “This year, our district-wide focus will include building a more connected culture for staff and students, heightening academic excellence for all students, and finalizing and implementing our Portrait of a Gator – the community-defined competencies that we aim to instill in every Gateway Gator.”

All schools will run on the same schedules as last year. Chester Elementary School (Blandford, Chester and Middlefield) and Littleville Elementary School (Huntington, Montgomery and Russell) schedules are 8:35 a.m.-3:35 p.m., with both schools serv-

ing grades K - 5. Gateway Regional School serves grade 6 - 12 students from all six member towns and outside towns via school choice from 7:20 a.m.-2:20 p.m.

New teachers and staff
The district is also welcoming new teachers and staff, including a new English Language Learner coordinator Barbara Page, Early Childhood Coordinator Lynn Thomson and a new Instructional Coach at GRS funded through the Barr Foundation Lexie Jennings.

Family resources
The Gateway website at www.grsd.org contains a

great deal of information for families. Staff contact information may be found on the staff directory page at each school’s website.

The Family Resources page on the Gateway website is a hub for quickly finding information that parents and caregivers need. The lunch menu may be found on its “Food Services” page.

Bus routes are expected to be posted to the Gateway website on Friday, Aug. 21, and will also be found under Family Resources (transportation). It is suggested that students be at their bus stops early on the first few days

STUDENTS, page 10

CHESTER



These beef cattle wait to enter the show stand in the shade before the beef show classes start. Submitted photos



These quilts were part of the exhibits on display at the Littleville Fair this past weekend, Aug. 7 to Aug. 9.



Saturday, Aug. 8 there were four classes of oxen draws. This young man feeds his oxen team at the Littleville Fair held last weekend in Chester.



Poultry were exhibited at the Littleville Fair.

Chester celebrates Littleville FAIR

RUSSELL

Family Fun Day and Car Show on Aug. 29

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The Eighth Annual Family Fun Day and Car Show takes place on Saturday, Aug. 29 at Strathmore Park, 950 Westfield Road.

Russell/Montgomery Police Chief Kevin Hennessey said, “Over the past eight years, the Russell-Montgomery Police Department’s Annual Family Fun Day and Car Show has evolved into something far greater than we could have ever anticipated. What began as a local community event serving the towns of Russell and Montgomery has grown to encompass families and residents from throughout the Hilltowns, the greater Westfield area, and beyond.”

Events begin at 10 a.m. and continue through 3 p.m. There will be a Police K-9 demonstration, raffles, for the younger set, a balloon artist, face painting,

free popcorn and for everyone, there will be food vendors including ice cream from Our Mother’s Kitchen.

According to Police Chief Hennessey, Family Fun Day provides an opportunity for police officers, first responders, residents, children and families to interact in a positive and welcoming environment.

“A family simply spending the afternoon with our officers can have a lasting impact,” he said.

The Massachusetts State Police and Life Star helicopters will arrive alternately between noon and 1 p.m.

Everyone will have a chance to sit in a cruiser or firefighting rig.

There will be a pie eating contest, don’t know what kind of pies yet, but they will be delicious.

Children will enjoy the bounce house and the water slide. There will be hot dogs and burgers in abundance. Admission is free for everyone.



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HILLTOWNS

Local towns receive grant awards for infrastructure

BOSTON - The Healey-Driscoll Administration announces \$904,985 in grant awards to advance local infrastructure projects and help communities across Massachusetts compete for federal funding.

Grants were awarded to transportation, clean energy, and resilience projects in 21 communities across the state. Fourteen awards were made to rural communities.

Local grant recipients include:

City of Northampton \$30,000 to support filing for Direct Pay clean energy tax credits with the IRS, specifically for a ground-source heat pump installation project at Northampton High School. Support from MTTA to Northampton will enable the city to secure these credits-representing a meaningful financial return on its clean energy investments-that would otherwise go unclaimed.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (rural community) \$64,700 for the regional planning agency, along with partners at Williams College and Luminary Evaluation, to administer a University of Michigan-designed Transportation Security Index (TSI) survey as a part of federal funds awarded through the U.S. Department of Transportation RAISE/BUILD grant to the Adventure to Ashuwillticook Trail (A2A Trail).

Town of Becket (rural community) \$25,000 to support filing for Direct Pay clean energy tax credits with the IRS, specifically for a wind turbine project. Support from MTTA to Becket will enable the town to secure these credits-representing a meaningful financial return on its clean energy investments-that would otherwise go unclaimed.

Town of Worthington (rural community) \$27,500 for the town to update its Hazard

Mitigation Plan. (HMP).

The awards were made via the Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance program, administered by the Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office. The program supports technical assistance activities for projects that are seeking or have received federal funds.

The MTTA program was enabled by legislation filed by Governor Healey, Chapter 214 of the Acts of 2024 (“An Act to Provide for Competitiveness and Infrastructure Investment in Massachusetts”) to support infrastructure projects in cities and towns across the state. Governor Healey filed the legislation as part of a comprehensive strategy to increase Massachusetts’ competitiveness for federal funding and empower local governments with more resources to advance infrastructure projects.

This is the third round of Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance awards made by the Federal

Funds and Infrastructure Office (FFIO). In total FFIO has awarded \$2,948,935 in MTTA grants to communities across Massachusetts.

Becket Town Administrator Katherine A. Warden said, “The Town of Becket, the Becket Energy Committee and Becket residents are very grateful for this MTTA award supporting our Small Wind Turbine project. Once operational, the turbine is expected to provide renewable, green power for all the electricity needs of the Becket Town Hall and a portion for our Town Highway garage for the next 50 years of its expected lifespan.”

Worthington Emergency Management Director David Mendelson said, “This grant will help the Town of Worthington update our current Hazard Management Plan, to reflect changes in current risks, as well as incorporating new risks related to climate change and new technologies.”

Baby item donations sought

New England Wound Care is seeking donations from the public on behalf of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of Central Western Massachusetts for a baby shower for women veterans and service members.

From now through Friday, Sept. 18, interested parties may donate their items at one of the following New England Wound Care offices: 94 North Elm St., Suite 102, Westfield or 101 Munson St., Suite 215, Greenfield.

The following items are needed: infant swing, strollers, highchairs, baby monitor, pack ‘n plays, mini cribs, sound machines, bottles/sippy cups, pacifiers, bibs, diapers, baby wipes, baby hygiene products, bathtubs, bath toys, blankets, Safety 1st kits, diaper creams, baby board books, baby towels, fitted crib sheets, clothing/onesies (multiple sizes).

The donations will be gifted to local, expecting women veterans and service members at the Veterans Affairs of Central Western

Massachusetts Baby Shower on Saturday, Sept. 26. For more information, people may call Kate at New England Wound Care at 413-475-3233 extension 208 or by email at Katelyn@newenglandwoundcare.com.

New England Wound Care, or NEWCare, is a specialized wound and ostomy care clinic with offices throughout Western Massachusetts. The highly skilled team provides comprehensive wound care to patients requiring assistance with acute and/or chronic wounds. They treat a variety of wounds, including but not limited to diabetic wounds, pressure wounds and dehiscent surgical wounds.

They also provide care to ostomy patients who are experiencing issues related to their device. Their offices are located in Westfield, Easthampton, Florence, Amherst and Greenfield. The specialized wound care team has over 30 years of experience in providing comprehensive wound care throughout Western Massachusetts.

WESTHAMPTON

Westhampton Public Library announces upcoming events

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Road, will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, Labor Day.

Hours are Monday and Thursday from 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.- noon and 1-5 p.m., Thursday 2-8 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

To place a request for curbside pickup, people should email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring programs include: computer help with Bob Miller second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting and crocheting group Mondays at 6 p.m., yoga

Mondays at 6 p.m, Scrabble Group Tuesdays at 2 p.m., Book Group fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m., Walk-in Wellness Clinics with Westhampton’s Public Health Nurse first and third Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat Wednesdays from 10 a.-noon, Tech Connect drop-in tech help Thursdays from 2-4 p.m. beginning Sept. 24.

Ongoing programs for children and teens are CFCE Playgroup Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., Story time with Emily returns on Wednesday, Sept. 30 at 10:30 a.m. and Kids Thursday after school programs and Teen Craft Night resume in October.

In the Community

Room Gallery the Hilltown Plein Air Painters exhibit is up through the end of September. This group of local artists has been painting together since 2003, exploring the Hilltowns and beyond.

Weekly outings are planned for morning paint outs with helpful support, critiques, and friendship. Plein air painting in a natural setting captures the beauty of this area that continues to inspire their work.

On Thursday, Sept. 17 at 6 p.m. Myco Marty’s Mushroom Mania takes place as Marty Keline shares his wisdom.

Klein of Easthampton is

a wild mushroom expert with decades of experience foraging, identifying, learning and teaching about these amazing organisms. An award winning photographer and artist, his stunning images of fungi will be projected throughout the talk.

Topics will include some notable local species, the lives of mushrooms and their ecological roles, foraging, edibility/toxicity, tips for beginners. The talk will be followed by a question and answer session.

A Community Silent Reading Party takes place on Thursday, Sept. 24 from 6-8 p.m. People are invited join a peaceful evening of reading for pleasure at the library. They may bring a book or check one out from the library’s collection. All ages are welcome and audiobooks are reading too, just be sure to bring headphones. Tea, hot cocoa and snacks will be provided.

According to a recent study by the National Institute of Health reading for pleasure amongst the aged 15+ population in the United States has declined by about 3% per year between 2003 and 2023. The study’s introduction reports that more significant declines have occurred amongst young adults aged 17-18 in the nationally representative

Monitoring the Future survey, with the proportion who read a book or magazine every day decreasing from 60% in the late 1970s to 16% by 2016.

On Saturday, Sept. 26 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. the University of Massachusetts entomology collection will visit. People will see a sampling of live and preserved insects up close. UMass students will be on hand to share information about the bugs and answer questions.

The Fall Festival 2026 will be held on Sunday, Oct. 4. The library will be open on Oct. 4 and then closed on Monday, Oct. 5 as well as Monday, Oct. 12.

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GOSHEN

Town Clerk announces election information

GOSHEN – The Town Clerk’s office is busy preparing for the State Primary on Tuesday, Sept. 1 and the State Election on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

The last day to register to vote for the State Primary is Saturday, Aug. 22. In person voter registration will be available at the Town Clerk’s Office, 40 Main St., that day from 9-11a.m. and 3-5 p.m. People can also register to vote online by visiting www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/

Sample Democrat and Republican ballots for the Primary can be viewed at www.goshen-ma.us. If people are an unenrolled (independent) voter, they may choose either the Democratic or Republican ballot when they vote. If they are registered as a Democrat or Republican, they must vote using their party’s ballot.

There are three ways to cast your ballot in the State Primary.

Vote in person on Election Day: Tuesday, Sept. 1 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. at the John James Memorial Hall.

Vote early in person: Saturday, Aug. 22 from

9 a.m.-1 p.m. or Monday, Aug. 24 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the John James Memorial Hall.

Vote by mail: Every registered voter should have received a prepaid postcard from the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office asking whether they would like to vote by mail. If they plan to vote in person, simply discard the postcard; no further action is needed. If they would like to vote by mail, their application must be received by the Town Clerk’s office no later than Tuesday, Aug. 25 at 5 p.m., so their ballot can be mailed to them.

If people did not receive the vote by mail postcard, they may apply through the State’s online portal. Completed vote by mail ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk’s office on Election Day by 8 p.m. in order to be counted. Ballots received after the polls close even if they are postmarked on or before Election Day cannot be counted.

If people have any questions or concerns, they may email the Town Clerk Kristen Estelle at clerk@goshen-ma.us or call 413-268-8236, extension 107.

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HUNTINGTON

The 413's close succesful summer concert series

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Local band The 413's will close the 2026 summer music series on the Huntington town green in the final concert scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 20.

This free concert ends a 7-week annual music series arranged by the town's Community Events Committee and with funding support from its local cultural council.

Dubbed "the hottest young rock band in Western Mass" this four year-old band holds a place of pride for area residents, as they hail from the Gateway hilltowns. They were honored to be the opening band to perform on the new stage at Zinky's Pub in

Dalton.

This summer's been a little hotter with this classic rock band playing at the Southwick Inn, the Student Prince in Springfield, the Elm St. Plaza in Westfield, and the Pines Theater in Northampton. They were also booked for the summer concert series at Stanley Park in Westfield and will perform at the Chatham Squire in Chatham, later this month.

The band will perform from 6:30-8 p.m. from the gazebo on the town green. Patrons are invited to bring their own chairs, but are reminded to leave their pets at home. The show will go on if it rains: it will move inside Stanton Hall, which is wheelchair accessible.

Each week, a local



The 413's, the "hottest young band in Western Mass.," will conclude the summer music lineup on the Huntington town green on Thursday, Aug. 20 starting at 6:30 p.m.

non-profit organization is invited to offer food for sale as a fundraising opportunity and to have the chance to speak with area residents about their services and answer questions. The Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center will offer food for sale and have information on upcoming adult education classes they offer.

This concludes a wonderful lineup of musicians that also included the Acoustic Thunder Duo, Meredith Robinson, Jon Berman, Rock 201, the Cover Daddys and Moon Hollow.

Huntington's Local Cultural Council is a local agency that gets its funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

North Hall Association presents Aug. 23 concert featuring Noble and Coletta

HUNTINGTON – The North Hall Association's 2026 Historic North Hall Arts Festival continues with three remaining free programs in August and September on the North Hall stage.

The six program season opened in July and all events are held on Sundays at 2 p.m.

On Sunday, Aug. 23, "The Composer's Voice" features original songs by Jerry Noble and Tania Coletta. The program includes poems set to music by Mary Oliver, Emily Dickinson and Rumi, as well as originals and there may be some surprises.

There will be solos as well as ensemble singing by

the quartet of Emily Baker, Kate Saik, Liam Shannon and Marc Winer. A variety of genres from classical to popular sounds characterize the music. Jerry Noble will accompany on the piano.

All performances are free (donations welcome) and begin at 2 p.m. Upstairs seating is limited to the first 75 attendees. Doors open at 1:30 p.m. North Hall is located at 40 Searle Road and is wheelchair accessible and air conditioned.

People may visit the website at www.northhall-huntington.org for program



Jerry Noble Tania Coletta

updates.

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

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

OPERATOR/LABORER POSITION

The Montgomery Highway Department is currently hiring for an **Operator/Laborer Position**. The position works under the supervision of the Highway Superintendent, an operator/ laborer will perform a broad range of manual work and operate motorized equipment in support of construction, maintenance, and repair operations for the Department.

Candidate must have or obtain all required licenses within (1) one year of start date (see the full job description for required skills/experience/training). Existing CDL and hoisting licenses preferred. Must pass a MADOT physical. Must also provide a current copy of your driving record from the Registry of Motor Vehicles to be considered for this position. The pay rate is \$26.00 - \$28.00 per hour, (pay comparable to experience). Paid health and dental insurance, vacation time, a retirement plan and 13 paid holidays.

Please email townhall@montgomeryma.gov to receive a current job description and employment application. This position will remain open until filled.

The town of Montgomery is an equal opportunity employer.

ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

The Montgomery Highway Department is currently hiring for a **Road Superintendent Position**. The position is responsible for planning, directing, and supervising the activities and operation of the towns' highway department and will perform a broad range of manual work and operate motorized equipment in support of construction, maintenance, and repair operations for the Department.

Candidate must have experience in management and operation and have all required licenses (see the full job description for required skills/experience/training). Existing CDL and hoisting licenses are preferred. Must pass a MADOT physical. Must also provide a current copy of your driving record from the Registry of Motor Vehicles to be considered for this position. The pay rate is \$29.00 to \$35.00 per hour (pay comparable to experience). The town offers paid health and dental insurance, vacation time, a retirement plan and 13 paid holidays.

Please email townhall@montgomeryma.gov to receive a current job description and employment application. This position will remain open until filled.

The town of Montgomery is an equal opportunity employer.

RAINS HELP FILL KNIGHTVILLE DAM

Turley Publications photo by Deborah Daniels

Knightville Dam in Huntington, reflects how full it is following three full days of heavy rain.

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GUEST COLUMN

SOCIAL SECURITY
Matters
By Russell Gloor



Is the Medicare Part B Premium a Percentage of our Social Security Amount?

Dear Rusty:
I have a simple question: Is the amount we pay for Medicare Part B premium a percent of our Social Security amount we receive?
Signed: Curious

Dear Curious:
Your Medicare Part B premium is not based on a percentage of your monthly Social Security benefit amount.

Medicare Part B premiums are set in October of each year by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and are based upon anticipated total costs of the Medicare program in the forthcoming year.

Generally speaking, Medicare Part B enrollee premiums are expected to offset about 25% of CMS’ anticipated total Medicare Part B costs; the rest is borne by the Federal Government.

So, when CMS estimates Medicare program costs for the upcoming year, they also look at the number of anticipated Part B enrollees. They then divide 25% of total anticipated Part B program costs by the number of expected Part B enrollees, resulting in the “standard” Medicare Part B premium for next year.

For 2026, the standard Part B premium amount is \$202.90. The standard premium for 2027 will be announced in October 2026 and will likely be different.

It’s important to understand also that not everyone pays the “standard” Part B premium. Some lower income seniors may pay less because of the so-called “hold harmless provision,” and some higher income folks may pay more than the “standard” monthly Part B premium because of a provision called Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount.

The “hold harmless provision” says that monthly Social Security benefits cannot decrease as a result of a Medicare premium increase, so if the annual SS Cost Of Living Adjustment is insufficient to offset any increase to the standard Part B premium, then the SS beneficiary may pay a smaller Part B premium amount so that their SS benefit doesn’t decrease (note there are exceptions to this rule).

Conversely, those with a higher “provisional income” (an IRS definition), may pay more than the standard Medicare Part B premium. That’s because of a provision known as IRMAA, which adds a supplemental amount on top of the standard Medicare Part B premium.

IRMAA supplement amounts are determined using a sliding scale to define the required higher Part B premium for each income level category and IRMAA will cause the Part B premium to be more than the standard premium amount.

For those with exceptionally high incomes, the

Part B premium can be as much as \$690 per month. For your information, income reported to the IRS two years ago is used to determine if an individual is subject to IRMAA for the forthcoming year.

The reason for this is timing: when next year’s Part B premium is determined in October of each current year, the IRS has processed all tax returns for the preceding year but doesn’t yet have individual income for the current year.

Thus, they must use a person’s income from October of the preceding year to determine who will pay the standard Part B premium next year, and who will pay a higher IRMAA amount.

And just to complete this picture, you should be aware that IRMAA also applies to Medicare Part D premiums. And that means that those with higher incomes who are affected by IRMAA for Part B will also pay a higher Medicare Part D premium.

Medicare Part D is private insurance coverage for prescription drugs). But none of this is related to your Social Security benefit 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

Midsummer questions for the Garden Lady

Karen, who has a vegetable garden in Hardwick, is concerned over her tomatoes cracking and is asking the Garden Lady for some advice.

“With all the rainstorms we’ve had, one measuring over 5 inches last week, my cherry tomatoes, and even some of my paste types are starting to crack. Is this a normal occurrence and if so, is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening in the future?”

This is a timely question, Karen, and one that I am sure a lot of readers can relate to. I know I can.

It’s always exciting when the tomatoes start ripening and then this happens.

Fruit cracking around the stem, either in rings or radiating downward is caused by overwatering; we or Mother Nature can be at fault. This year I will blame her for some of it.

A week ago many gardeners in the area received an inch or more of rain in two separate deluges. Keep in mind that most veggies require about an inch per week.

Adjust your irrigation to accommodate for the excess.

Mulches do well to moderate soil moisture; if you mulch, you can water less often. If cracking ends up being a big problem for you, consider scouring the seed catalogs for varieties that are resistant to it.

As long as the cracks are fresh, and haven’t begun to show mold, I use the fruit

anyway. Watering issues can also affect other plants. Sometimes gardeners complain that their cucumbers look funny, bent in the shape of an apostrophe.

This effect is also from uneven watering. Besides making necessary adjustments, trellising can also help them to grow straight.

This question came in from Frances who reads the column in the Ware River News: “I have some thornless blackberry plants that produce huge fruit. Occasionally some of the segments on the berries are not colored deep purple or black; they are more of a tan or white color. I was curious why this happens? Years ago when I grew red raspberry bushes I also remember sometimes having this problem. Is it something with my soil? Are the berries safe to eat? I am hopeful it is not some type of mold or fungus.”

Although I do not have a picture to be one hundred percent certain, I believe what you are describing is “drupelet disorder.” The lighter areas on your berries are from sun scald. A reaction simply caused by too much heat.

And yes, they are safe to eat.

Some people comment that the berries with this disorder are a little tough or flavorless. It doesn’t really bother me.

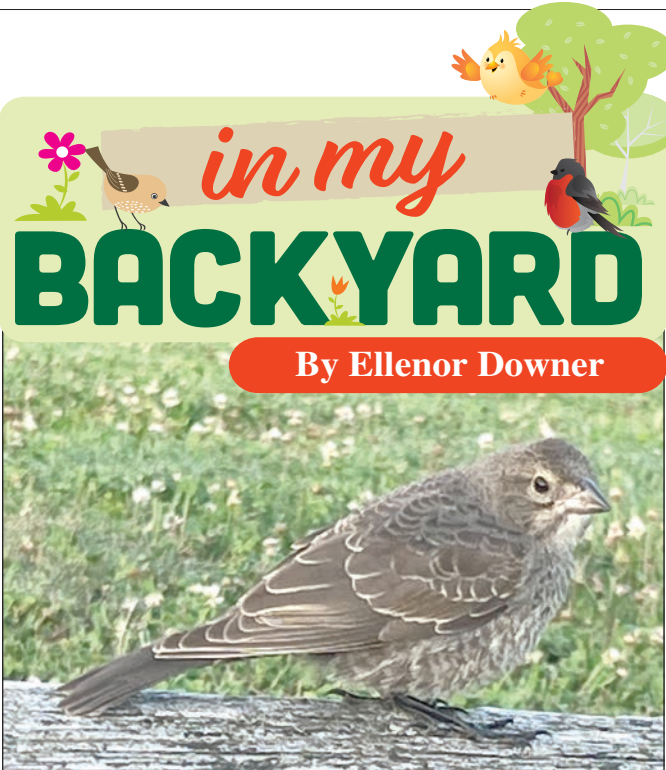
Moldy berries would look furry and the area would be raised. Bill is growing basil for the first time and he had this question for the Garden Lady: “My basil was slow to take off. I came back from vacation and it is in flower. While the bees seem to enjoy the flowers, I was hoping to harvest some of the leaves. Do you have any advice as to how to get it out of flower mode and into leaf production?”

Yes, I do. It involves giving the basil a hair cut. Sure enough, your plant needs to be rid of those flowers.

Once you do that, provide some nitrogen to get them greened up and growing. This could be by the addition of a little blood meal at the base of the plant or a foliar feed of fish emulsion or compost tea.

In no time your plant will rebound. Just be sure to keep those flowers trimmed off.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 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.



Juvenile brown headed cowbird

My daughter, Paula Ouimette, took this photo of a juvenile brown headed cowbird watching her run laps with her dog, Jo Jo.

The young cowbird perched on a fence near the

driveway of the elementary school in Hardwick.

My daughter used the Seek app by iNaturalist to get the identification. It stayed there for about 20 minutes before flying off.

She said there were no

other cowbirds around, but cowbirds lay their eggs in nests of birds smaller than them in hopes they will raise their young.

Obviously, this young cowbird looks well feed. I wonder what bird raised it, often at the expense of their own offspring.

Warblers and vireos are the most common cowbird hosts. Their nestlings weight less than half as much as the cowbird nestling.

Some species will either push the cowbird egg out of their nest or leave that nest and start another nest.

The brown-headed cowbird is a stocky blackbird. The females do not build a nest and instead produce up to three dozen eggs per summer.

They lay the eggs in the nests of other bird species and let them raise their young, know as brood parasitism.

Brown-headed cowbirds are native to North America, but many people consider them a nuisance bird because of their parenting style.

Cowbirds destroy the eggs and young of smaller songbirds and have been implicated in the decline of several endangered species, including Kirtland’s warbler and black-capped vireo.

Adult male cowbirds have glossy black bodies and brown heads, hence their name. In poor lighting, the male’s head looks brown.

The female is brown with the head lighter brown than the body. She has fine streaking on the belly/ Both sexes have thick, conical bills and black eyes.

They are 7.5 to 8.7 inches long. They feed on the ground and can be seen walking behind livestock to eat what their hooves stir up.

They are found in open habitats such as fields, pastures, meadows, forest edges and lawns. They also perch on a prominent branch high in a tree.

They are primarily seed-eaters and insectivores, adapting their diet based on availability and season, often gleaned from the ground or

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader supports Jeromie Whalen

Through the course of my life, I've had the privilege of serving my community in many different ways. I recently retired after over 20 years in the Massachusetts Army National Guard, I've spent nearly two decades as a federal civilian employee, and I've dedicated countless volunteer hours to suicide prevention, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and nonprofit leadership. Those experiences have taught me that the best leaders aren't the ones who seek attention; they're the ones who show up, listen, and work alongside the people they serve.

Those are the qualities I see in Jeromie Whalen. Politics has become increasingly divided, but I believe our representatives should be judged less by political rhetoric and more by their character, accessibility, and willingness to serve. Jeromie approaches leadership with humility, compassion, and a

genuine desire to hear from the people he hopes to represent. Rather than talking at constituents, he listens to them. Rather than promising easy solutions, he's willing to have honest conversations about difficult issues.

After spending my own life in public service, I've learned to recognize leadership that comes from a place of service instead of ambition. That is why Jeromie has earned my support. Every voter deserves to make an informed decision, and I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to meet the candidates, ask questions, and engage in the democratic process. As for me, I'll be casting my vote for Jeromie Whalen because I believe he represents the kind of thoughtful, community centered leadership that Massachusetts' First Congressional District deserves.

Amber DeGrandpre
Chicopee

Markey's record hurt hilltowns

I waited 25 years to get high-speed fiber optic broadband service, which finally arrived in 2021.

Living on the wrong side of the digital divide as most of us in the hilltowns have, has been exacerbated by the actions of Sen. Ed Markey. Let's review his sorry record.

Markey voted against the Farm Bill in 1985, 1996 and 2002. This legislation is what reauthorizes the Rural Utilities Service, which administers rural broadband programs for residents and businesses as well as distance-learning and tele-medicine initiatives.

In the 2002 bill, the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 was amended to provide funds to allow rural consumers to receive high-speed broadband service at a six-year cost of \$100 million as well as allow for expansion of 911 telephone service.

After Congress authorizes a program, it has to put up the money to pay for it. Because RUS is in the Rural Development section of the Agriculture Department, the funding comes through the Agriculture Appropriations bill, the annual spending plan for USDA agencies. Here, Markey rubbed salt in the wound by voting against a series of ag approps bills:

In 1992 he voted against the bill which contained \$2.9 billion for rural development.

In 1995 and 1999 he voted against the bill which contained \$2.1 billion for rural development.

In 2006 he voted against the bill which contained \$5.38 billion in loans for rural electrification and telecommunications.

These votes help explain why Markey never visits our region of the state.

Matt L. Barron
Chesterfield

GUEST COLUMN

I write my mother's story to share the lessons she taught

By P.K. Sidharth
Guest Columnist

I realized that my mother had shared her destiny with me.

She is life's longing in the time when adversity is turned into opulence. I had lived watching the world my mother shared with me.

I turned twenty-seven last August and I turn back to find life is fixed upon reality. There were moments when I had to follow her, to know the world in many meanings.

Mother encouraged me to see the perfect lines that were drawn in the phase of reality. The real world was everywhere and I had to look into it every time.

I was a child with a curiosity leading to the discovery of the diary once upon a time. I read out some poems, I cherished them as I can't tell whether they were written for me. I read out, I saw her unpublished world in my hands and I didn't know what to do, so I cherished them like memories.

I took the poems to my heart where it spoke of her emotion written in language. Later I cultivated my own poems after it was published in 2018, that took off.

I received my earliest support from my mother when I developed an interest towards poetry, she brought me books of the classical

age, the romantics, as the literal world was empty like my mind. I was innocent like many children,

I didn't know Shakespeare, I never got a chance to befriend Lord Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage nor Milton's Paradise lost. I didn't know how to start a poem when I read many of my mother's craft.

I developed no rhyme nor prose in my teenage years, as everything I thought was already written by others. I was lost like a star among the clouds.

It had to be my mother's dream to become a writer which I can only write today. She never thought about it for many years, could she become a writer at all, does she have any choice?

She just chose my father as her husband and me with my brother ran through her mind. We two were sheltered in her womb for some months. And we saw the day that was born along with us.

It had many events, like former Prime Minister Vajpey was elected, and I add to tell my mother that Aug. 15 is the day I wished to be born, as you gave birth on Aug.10.

The picture was clear that it was not my mother who planned everything, including my birth, after I was born, with two hands and two legs and had to crawl for some time till I was able at the age of three.

Mother had intentionally scared me to fall asleep with the spooky. I grew up with her stories in my imag-

ination. She spoke of the ghost that had two fangs, the nightmares and the hound.

I was frightened till I reached the age of twelve, as I began reading some books. My mind had thoughts that came like the wind of seasons.

Mother developed the first interest in me, the interest that later colored my wings and my poetry. I wrote a line with that, and wrote again with my mother's ideals. It was the beginning of discovering myself with the rest of everything that I had an interest in.

I learned a few sums, the history of the world in textbooks and some school poems. I never befriended Archimedes while in school, history was never thought of in boredom. I had managed to get to know some historical figures who had no idea that they had been etched in the pages.

It was plain and simple to learn Gandhi and others who gave us the freedom we needed by 1947. Mother schooled me well in the readings she gave, which shaped me well.

I was not known to literature, it was not my pen, and I fell into it like an apple that falls into the basket. Knowledge was everywhere, free to be used, gained and packed off in letters.

I had confidence once I was prepared to face the world, without a smile or hesitation. I was prepared by the womb that nestled me for months in life. Every day was nourished like food that was added to my growth.

I gulp wisdom to see it and confidence to over

stream the rivers I cross. I had to cross a few rivers in life, which were selected by myself and my confidence had been checked some times. It was not breaking fully, as I rode o'er again.

I wrote again with the same interest as fully as ever, to make a poem by my pen to the paper. It rhymed with my mother's inspiration behind the scene. I saw it, my lines getting hued with similes and other metaphors. It was soft like my mother's touch.

I saw my mother giving her sacrifice out like burning out in flames to make my day and night. The stars were also my mother's own creation in every aspect. She was my first teacher to teach me, and I went to school to learn.

I was clear she had the goodwill to educate me and brother, in the system of schooling. I learned a few lines from my mother's poem while she wrote in her youth, it personified her womb where I heard my voice echoing along with the ripples found evidently in the ocean of life.

She carried me for months and left me open to the light. I had to leave her womb with a new name, with a new life and a new gesture.

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BIRDS

by following grazing animals. They will come to feeders as well and prefer sunflower seeds and millet.

Other Hardwick birds

My daughter, Paula, saw lots of bluebirds, swallows, robins and one hen turkey with a poult. She said there were probably more underneath the hen turkey, but only one was brave enough to come out.

Red tail hawks

I saw several red tail hawks in Barre, New Braintree and Oakham.

Recently, one flew off and the sunshine showed off the hawks red tail. They are often seen by freshly mowed fields in hopes of catching some rodents, who stand out on a newly cut field.

Great blue heron

Long Pond in Rutland is a popular spot to find a great blue heron "fishing" in the shallows along Route 122.

Meal worms

I continue to have catbirds come for the mealworms I leave them on the

picnic table. The other day I heard a catbird make its meowing call. Males use the call to establish territory and females for communication and alarm purposes.

Raven

Recently, the common raven flew overhead making its gurgling croak. I could hear it, but I was unable to see it with all the trees.

People may report a bird sighting by emailing edowner@turley.com or calling or texting 774-262-5882.

from page 4

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.

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
Website: fccblandford.com
Sunday service 10 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Chester

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

First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

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

Hilltown Community Church

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

Holy Family Parish

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

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

New Boston Congregational Church

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

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd., Huntington MA 01050
413-667-3196
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)

BLANDFORD

Blandford Historical Society... Did You Know?

BLANDFORD – It almost all started with a bake sale.

Thirty-one years ago, the future of Blandford’s iconic White Church was uncertain. The church desperately needed repairs, but where would the money come from?

Standing outside the Porter Memorial Library, one of the women from the Blandford Historical Society suggested a bake sale to get the ball rolling.

It wasn’t a bad idea. Bake sales have helped churches and community groups for generations.

Then part-time Blandford resident Eve Queler, who spends the rest of the year in Manhattan, walked up. She had another idea.

“I’ll do a concert” and not just any concert. By then, Maestro Queler was world famous in opera, having gone from studying music in the Bronx to founding the Opera Orchestra of New York and conducting more than 100 operas at Carnegie Hall.

Her concert-style performances put singers and orchestra front and center. She built a reputation for reviving rarely performed operas, helping return long-neglected works to major stages.

Along the way, she broke barriers in a fiercely



Photos Courtesy of Blandford Historical Society

The Bel Canto Opera vocalists with Eve Queler, third from right and Douglas Martin, from left, curtain call after last year’s event.

er was born, the Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival.

For its first several years, it contributed about \$33,000 before outgrowing Blandford and moving to larger venues. We told that story in an earlier Did You Know? column about Pat Lucas.

The opera concerts, however, remain.

Over three decades, they raised more than \$200,000 for the 1822 landmark, listed on the National Register of

Historic Places. In 2006, the Blandford Historical Society took on ownership responsibilities and, with support from the Opera concerts, donors and grants, completed a three-year restoration in time for the building’s 200th anniversary in 2022.

Today, The White Church is known for its beauty and remarkable acoustics.

Opera for Everyone

Here’s another surprise. This isn’t a four-hour opera with elaborate scenery and costumes.

It’s an evening of opera’s masterpieces sung by excep-

tional voices, with Eve Queler and pianist Douglas Martin.

This year’s concert features works by Mozart, Johann Strauss, Wagner, Bizet, Delibes, Leoncavallo, Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, and Donizetti, performed by four guest artists whose careers are already taking them to the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, major European competitions, and leading opera companies across America.

Never been to an opera?

Here’s your chance to give it a try. Come as you are. No need to understand Italian. No opera expertise required.

Just ninety minutes of extraordinary music in one of New England’s most beautiful churches—a place your ticket will also help preserve. Not bad for a town of about 1,200 people and an idea that almost started with a bake sale.

The 31st Annual Bel Canto Opera Concert will be held Saturday, Aug. 29 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45 and may be purchased online at www.thewhitechurch.org or www.blandfordhistoricalsociety.org, or at the door with cash, check or credit card. Children 16 and under are free.

Donations for the church’s preservation and maintenance, in memory or honor of someone if people so choose, can be made on either website.



Melanie Spector soprano



Catherine Wethington soprano



Ben Brady bass baritone



Joseph Sacchi tenor

male-dominated field. She also worked with legendary artists including Plácido Domingo, Montserrat Caballé, Renata Scotto and Carlo Bergonzi.

She believed she could bring outstanding rising opera talent to Blandford and ask people to support

the church by buying a ticket. That simple offer changed everything.

Saving a Landmark

Nearly every summer since, Maestro Queler returned to The White Church with emerging artists.

Around that same time, another church fundrais-

BLANDFORD HOLDS SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT



Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Marcia Eckert at the piano accompanies Sara Paar as she sings humorous, tragic and powerful songs. Audience laughed, gasped and were in awe of the powerful voice and sonorous piano.

CHESTER

Library hosts reptile program

CHESTER – Riverside Reptiles is bringing their “Jeepers Creepers” program to the Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., for their summer reading program finale on Saturday, Aug. 15 at 10 a.m.

Participants will get up

close with some of nature’s most unusual and often misunderstood creatures. “Jeepers Creepers” features a fun mix of reptiles, amphibians, insects, arachnids and other invertebrates.

This event is perfect for all age groups, encouraging

curiosity and respect for all living things. Participants learn what these creatures eat, how they survive and why even the “creepy” ones are important parts of the natural world.

RSVPs are helpful by calling 413-354-7808.

REQUEST

from page 1

labeled that will be returned to the appropriate office once the library’s expansion is finished. Department will be notified by email.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera asked that someone be available on sale days to take cash or check for items.

New sound system

Coury explained the new sound/television system which can be relocated in the gym for large meetings. Wireless microphones are in use.

Also for use in the gym is a new speaker on the wall next to the stage and there are wireless microphones for use there.

She said the equipment purchase was made because people had complained about not being able to hear everyone in the room speaking and the new equipment should change that.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera relayed the new federal mileage rate which went from \$.725 to \$.76 per mile as of July 1.

She then discussed possible opportunities for seeking funding for the proposed new Fire Station through the Build for Mass program, which is the first municipal infrastructure loan providing flexible, low-interest financing that helps communities move projects forward faster while maximizing available federal funding opportunities.

MassDevelopment, the state’s economic development finance agency, administers the program. There is an established \$75 million fund available for infrastructure projects and might be an option. There are other possibilities as well.

Coury said a grant may be an option.

The town also has a total of \$25.40 available for eligible transportation.

South Hadley’s Plumbing Inspector re-inspected the Kaiser/Chaffee home, results will be forthcoming.

Regarding cyber security, all town computers must be updated as those

employees with a town email address need to have their computers updated and a two-factor identification created.

The remainder of the meeting covered Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay and multiple contracts and grants requiring approval/signatures. One was for the dirt roller which was signed.

Highway Department

Coury did ask Hultay why this was last minute; he had the information on July 22 after hours and sent to the board on July 23, which was after the Monday meeting. The board signed the contract and it will be four weeks before the notice to proceed comes from Department of Transportation. Coury discussed a process for getting signatures when timelines “bottlenecked,” which was notification so the members could go to Town Hall to sign a contract that had been approved.

Hultay assured the board that he was informing the board and looking for feedback when he sent the paperwork out via email, and was not looking for signatures at that time.

Coury told him if he had received no feedback, he should consider that it was “good to go.” The contract needed to be signed by July 31. She asked that he give the board enough time to sign.

“We’re here for you, we want to get it done,” she said.

Hultay asked the board to contact him if there were any questions or issues involving Highway.

Coury said the board could discuss Highway concerns even if no one from Highway is in attendance inasmuch as Highway was on the agenda for the July 20 meeting, but was not there. Hultay did say he had informed the board on July 15 via the administrative assistant that neither the department nor Hultay would be present.

There is a temporary Inter-governmental

Agreement with SWSC regarding granting permission for Highway to create a turn-off area onto South Otis to connect to Julius Hall.

Hultay wants to be certain there is access for residents on the other side of where the culvert will be replaced on Julius Hall Road {with the grant funding,} as well as the seven households on the road.

Cousineau asked that Highway put up a “Limited Access” sign on both ends of Beech Hill Road as Julius Hall and South Otis connect on Beech Hill twice.

Cousineau also questioned the work as there are no homes involved on South Otis. Hultay said that since the roads are Chapter 90 roads, the town should make some effort in maintenance. The board voted approval of the IGA, which has a five-year expiration.

A notice of Intent has been filed with Conservation Commission for Beech Hill Road bridge work. Coury said Gill Engineering had asked who owned Cobble Mountain Road and why should that be important. According to Hultay, Gill was trying to find alternate detour routes while the work was ongoing. There are no convenient detours according to Cousineau.

A Baily Bridge, a temporary structure located at the work site, would be a possible solution.

The Department of Transportation has to be certain of a detour before signing off on the design work.

The water trailer has been delivered at a cost of \$24,589.99 from Ch. 90 funds at no cost to the town.

The Julius Hall Road culvert grant is to be resubmitted for the new funding cycle and another grant for design and engineering phase for the School House Road bridge.

The state will provide a designer for the bridge work for up to \$150,000 and up to \$1 million for construction.

The board met with Hultay again on Thursday to finalize all requests.

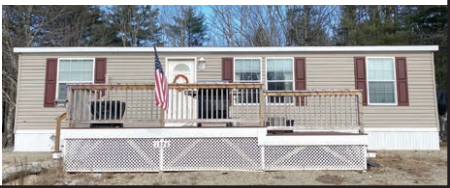


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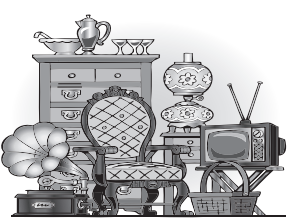
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9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price \$26.00
21 Base Price \$26.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

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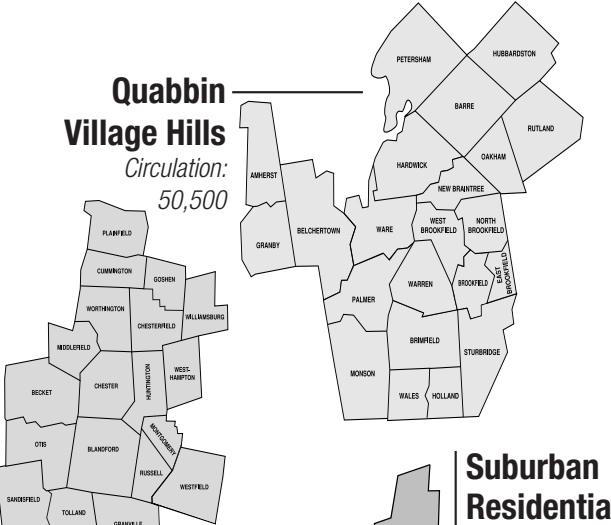
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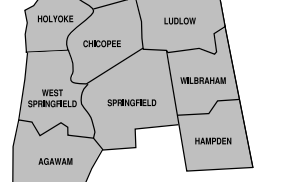
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PUBLIC NOTICES

Town of Worthington Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing
The Town of Worthington Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing **Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 7:00 PM** in the Meeting Hall at 160 Huntington Road. The Commission will consider the filing of a Notice of Intent for the following project: A Large-Scale Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation (LS-GMSPI) at 105 Old Post Road. 08/13/2026

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE CHESTERFIELD PLANNING BOARD
A public hearing will be held at **6:30 PM on Thursday, August 27, 2026** in the Davenport Town Offices, 422 Main Road, Chesterfield, MA to hear public comments on a final Battery Energy Storage (BESS) Zoning Bylaw to regulate BESS of capacities up to 100 Mwh whether Co-located, Freestanding or Accessory, in any zoning or overlay districts. This bylaw can be found on the town website, www.townofchesterfieldma.com, and/or in the Town Clerk’s Office. The meeting can also be attended by Zoom at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81320260813>
Sarah Hamilton
Acting Chair,
Planning Board
08/13, 08/20/26

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT HAMPDEN, Div. Probate & Family Court Dept. HD26E0036PP
To Melissa J Reid, of Hampshire County, and to all other persons interested
A petition has been presented to said Court by Robert S. Reid, of Morris County, NJ, representing that they hold as tenants in common in an undivided part or share of land lying in Chester, in the County of Hampden, setting forth that they desire that all of said land may be sold at private sale for not less than Two Hundred Forty Thousand dollars (\$240,000.00), and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided

at private sale, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof after full adjudication of the equitable claims contained in said petition and supplemental memorandum filed with the Court.
If you desire to object thereto, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection in said Court at **Springfield** on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **September 17th, 2026**.
Witness, CLAUDINE T. STOUDEMIRE, First Justice of said Court, this 23rd day of July 2026.
Rosemary A. Saccomani,
Register
08/06, 08/13, 08/20/2026

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT TOWN OF HUNTINGTON STANTON AVENUE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – PHASE 2
The Town of Huntington invites sealed Bids for the Stanton Avenue Improvement Project – Phase 2. Sealed bids will be received at the offices of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01104 **until 10:00 a.m., prevailing time, on**

Thursday August 27, 2026 at which time said bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.
The project is being administered by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, FY25 Huntington Community Development Block Grant Programs.
The Base Bid scope of work includes installation of approximately 1,800 square feet of concrete sidewalk, 1,840 linear feet of curbing, 3,500 square yards of road reclamation, 1,000 square yards of loaming and seeding, and associated work.
The estimated project cost for the Base Bid is **\$390,000**.
Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available August 5, 2026 at www.biddocs.com (may be viewed electronically and downloaded at no cost) or hard copies may be purchased online at www.biddocs.com or at Nashoba Blue, Inc. at 433 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749 (978-568-1167).
Bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit in the amount of five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount, considering all alternates, and made payable to the

Town of Huntington.
All bids for this project are subject to the provisions and minimum wage rates required by M.G.L. c.30, §39M as amended, and M.G.L. c.149, §§26 to 27H, inclusive. All applicable Federal minimum wage rates and applicable Federal labor standards shall also apply pursuant to the Davis-Bacon Act. When both State and Federal wage rates are applicable, the higher rate must be paid.
This project is subject to Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements. A memorandum documenting BABA compliance shall be provided within 30-days of the Notice to Proceed.
The Awarding Authority encourages, to the extent feasible, the use of minority-, women- and disadvantaged- owned businesses for work under this contract and likewise encourages, to the greatest extent possible, that all bidders take affirmative steps to ensure training and employment for lower-income project area residents and award of subcontracts to HUD-defined Section 3 businesses. Bidders on the work shall make a good faith effort to achieve the goals of the Federal Minority and Women’s Business

Enterprise (MBE/WBE) policy regarding utilization of MBEs and WBEs in order to be deemed a responsible bidder.
Bids may be changed or withdrawn prior to the bid opening, but not within the sixty (60) days subsequent to the bid opening, by submission of such a change in writing in a sealed envelope, identifying the submitting party and indicating that it contains a correction of the bid for the Stanton Avenue Improvement Project, Huntington, MA.
The lowest qualified responsible bidder shall be awarded the contract subject to availability of funds under the EOHLC Block Grant program. The Town of Huntington, the Awarding and Contracting Authority, may cancel this Invitation for Bid (IFB), in whole or in part, at any time that such an act is deemed in its best interest, reserves the right to waive any informality in the bidding or to reject any and all bids in total or in part as may be deemed to serve the best interest of the Town, and will not be responsible for any costs incurred by a bidder in preparing and submitting a bid in response to this IFB.
08/06, 08/13/2026

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60	61							62	63				64	
65						66							67	
68						69							70	

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Midway between south and southeast
- 4. Fathers
- 9. Wine grape
- 14. Al Bundy’s wife
- 15. Derived from ammonia
- 16. Venezuelan state
- 17. Interest rate
- 18. Experts
- 20. Vascular tissues
- 22. Smooth and glossy
- 23. Administrative region in S. Korea
- 24. One from Damascus
- 28. Special interest group
- 29. It cools your home
- 30. Oh, God!
- 31. Intestinal pouches
- 33. Men
- 37. Twelfth star in a constellation
- 38. Former CIA
- 39. Arrange in grades of size

- 41. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- 42. “The Great Lakes State”
- 43. Having earlike appendages
- 44. Momentarily stop
- 46. Ancient kingdom
- 49. Of I
- 50. White clerical vestment
- 51. Songs to one’s beloved
- 55. Charges
- 58. Computer application originator
- 59. A place to dock a boat
- 60. One guided by reason
- 64. Slang for cigarette
- 65. Sailboats
- 66. “Jerry Maguire” actor
- 67. Screen type
- 68. Country legend Haggard
- 69. Puts together in time
- 70. When you anticipate arriving

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Involuntary muscular contraction
- 2. Eastern US transit agency
- 3. Leaves a place
- 4. Cease to participate
- 5. Current units
- 6. Cease to exist
- 7. General’s assistant (abbr.)
- 8. Earth vibration
- 9. Very strong winds
- 10. For each one
- 11. A bog
- 12. The creation of beautiful or significant things
- 13. Affirmative
- 19. Pie __ mode
- 21. Nonclerical
- 24. Indonesian island
- 25. Educational environment
- 26. Namibian peoples
- 27. Bring out or develop

- 31. Moves into a place of thought
- 32. Out of the way
- 34. Loads a ship
- 35. Beloved Hollywood alien
- 36. Distinguishes
- 40. The ancient Egyptian sun god
- 41. Secondary or explanatory title
- 45. Relating to a wing
- 47. One who gives a speech
- 48. In the middle
- 52. Loop with a running knot
- 53. Airborne (abbr.)
- 54. Sweet persons
- 56. Put into play
- 57. Small cattle breed
- 59. Millisecond
- 60. Revolutions per minute
- 61. They __
- 62. Moon crater
- 63. A place to stay the night

THIS WEEK’S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
You have been burning the candle at both ends. You can’t run on caffeine and grit all of the time. Find a day to rest before your body makes that decision for you.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
Someone is testing your patience this week, Taurus. Before you stick to your guns, ask yourself if this is a battle worth fighting and then proceed.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
It’s time to mute as much internal noise as possible, Gemini. Focus on one project and make a concerted effort to finish it before jumping to the next thing on your to-do list.

CANCER

June 22/July 22
Cancer, the stars are washing over your emotional sector, making you confront what you have been sweeping under the rug for some time. Trust your feelings.

LEO

July 23/Aug 23
Leo, the universe is asking you to give others a shot to shine and for you to step into the background. Use this week to refine your talents out of the spotlight.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, keep your eyes open for a chance encounter mid-week that could spark a great new idea. Let go of the need to control the outcome and just go with the flow.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
Collaboration is your superpower this week, Libra. If you’ve been stuck on a professional problem, run it by a colleague. The answer may lie in a perspective you haven’t considered yet.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
Your financial intuition is incredibly sharp, Scorpio. Trust your instincts right now. It’s a great week to pitch a big idea, ask for a raise or reevaluate your budget

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, you are feeling an itch to break free from your routine but don’t know where to begin. Don’t drop everything just yet. Explore little adventures first.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
There are a lot of ideas floating around in your head, Capricorn, but none have solidified into action just yet. Seek the opinions of others to identify a path forward.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, every time you think you have a plan in place, the variables change. That’s alright because you always have a backup idea should different scenarios present themselves.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
You can’t predict where a relationship will go, Pisces. This week it is best to simply maintain the status quo. Things will be revealed soon enough.

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

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	L	E		S	O	N	A	S		E	T	R	E	M
D	O	T		E	N	E	R		S	V	O	R	E	D
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7	1	3	4	8	9	9	6	2
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3	4	6	1	2	7	8	9	9
8	9	1	6	9	3	4	2	7
9	2	7	8	9	4	1	3	6
4	7	8	9	1	2	6	9	3
9	6	2	3	4	8	9	7	1
1	3	9	9	7	6	2	8	4

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A group of people are kayaking on a river. In the foreground, a purple kayak with a person in a yellow life vest is moving towards the left. To its right, a white kayak with two people, one in an orange life vest, is moving towards the right. Further back, a green kayak with a person in a black life vest is moving towards the left. In the background, a blue kayak with a person in a white life vest is visible. The river is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery.

A group of people are participating in a river cleanup. In the foreground, two people are wading in the water near a blue and white kayak. One person is wearing an orange shirt and patterned shorts, and the other is wearing a grey shirt and dark shorts. They appear to be pulling or moving something in the water. In the background, three other people are standing on a grassy bank. One person is wearing a pink shirt and patterned shorts, and another is wearing a grey shirt and dark shorts. They are holding long poles or paddles. The river is surrounded by dense green vegetation and trees.

Whitney Field in Westfield was the take out point.

Keeping up with Hilltown traditions only once in a big while does the Westfield River get deep enough to paddle down river through Russell, Woronoco and Westfield. Lots of rain last week (monumental amounts) raised the Westfield River in Woronoco enough for the rare opportunity to paddle this usually super shallow and rocky section. At 5.5 feet on Sunday the river was ready for the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers. Ten paddlers including some first timers cruised down river, under the turnpike bridge, over rapids avoiding rocks and seeing the beau-

ty of the Hilltowns from the Westfield Wild and Scenic river.

People may check the Hilltown Hikers' YouTube channel for a video they made by putting a GoPro on Greg's hat for this wild ride.

Heather Wyman, Westfield Wild Water Races' key team leader helped guide the group as well as Greg Deily from Southwick, who has competed in the races in the past and a big thank you to Alan McLean from West Springfield for the safety prep and his friend John for being the sweep.

Stephanie Brown from Agawam traded in her River Races parking attendant safety vest for a life vest and gave it

a go too. The Westfield River is very underutilized for outdoor recreation here in the Hilltowns.

Many other paddlers have expressed their wanting to paddle more of this river, but without regular or planned water releases during high water times similar to the Deerfield River this is not possible. People are urged to be an advocate and stand by the paddlers to hopefully get some kind of program together including more fishing access and portage access to the river so that they all can enjoy what is right in their backyard and one of the area's best assets. All can hope for an outfitter, designated parking for paddlers and more.

Sara and Mark from Westfield hit the river for the first time as they learn how to navigate the Westfield River.



They enjoy a quiet part of the Westfield River.

District gives notice of destruction of school records

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington School District gives notice of destruction of Special Education records 2026.

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 2019. 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 Sept. 1, 2026.

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 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 seven 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@rhconwell.org.

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Thomas Vaillancourt of Easthampton

University of Hartford
Doctor of Physical Therapy
Asheyln Baran of Westfield
Master of Science in organizational psychology
Abigail Cervonayco of Westfield

University of Maryland
Bachelor's Degree
Dakota Blaylock of Westfield

There may be changes to some routes over the first few days, so people should check back to make sure the times are still correct. If they are having trouble locating their child's bus, they may call 413-685-1011, email Melissa McKellick at mmckellick@grsd.org or call the principal's office at their child's school for help.

Information about the School-Based Health Center (SBHC) at Gateway, run by Hilltown Community Health Centers, Inc., is also accessed from the Family Resources tab. The SBHC is open from 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. when school is in session and provides medical and dental care for students at school.

Before and after school care is provided at Littleville Elementary School for

students in grades PreK through 6 by the Greater Westfield YMCA. This fee-based program offers two days, three days, or five days of care; financial assistance is available.

Additional information may be found under the "Family Resources" tab on the Littleville website. This program will also be offered at Chester Elementary School if enough families enroll. Financial assistance

is available and seven hills vouchers are accepted.

Sports tryouts

Athletic Director Matthew Bonenfant announces the tryout days and times for the fall sports season. This is for student athletes in grades 7 - 12. Athletes are expected to attend all sessions.

Girls Cross Country tryouts will run Aug. 24 to Aug. 27 from 3:30-5 p.m.

Boys Cross Country tryouts

will run from Aug. 24 to Aug. 28 from 3:30-5 p.m. Both boys and girls soccer tryouts will be held from 4-6 p.m. from Aug. 24 to Aug. 28. They are not held together.

Additional athletics information, including links to downloading the arbiter app containing the sports schedule, are also located on the athletics page, also found under the family resources tab.

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