

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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## SCHOOLS & YOUTH

### Gateway names Melissa Matarazzo superintendent

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

The Gateway Regional School Committee held an executive session on Tuesday, Aug. 5 at 7 p.m.

and successfully negotiated a three-year contract with their choice for Gateway's next Superintendent, Dr. Melissa Matarazzo.

After about an hour, the committee returned to open session and unanimously voted to approve that contract. Matarazzo is set to begin on Friday, Aug. 15, and will be in the district starting Monday, Aug. 18. The new superintendent's salary is prorated for the first year at \$155,000.

Matarazzo is currently the Chief Administrative Officer for Studer Education, an educational consulting firm. She holds an Ed.D. and Master's in Education from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University. Matarazzo began her career as an eighth grade teacher and then assistant principal in the Derry Cooperative School District. She then served as a middle school principal for Peabody Public Schools, later becoming executive director for achievement and accountability in the



Dr. Melissa Matarazzo

Charleston County School District before moving on to Studer.

When asked what attracted her to Gateway, Matarazzo said, "Gateway represents the kind of school district where I started my own education—small, rural and with the unique challenges and opportunities that brings. In addition, positive comments from regional search consultants and the opportunity provided by the Barr Foundation work were enticing. Finally, as I joined each interview in the process, I appreciated the inclusion of different representatives from across the district and a healthy honesty and pride that were expressed by participants."

When Smidy announced her resignation in late spring, the school committee wrestled with the likelihood of a long, protracted and potentially expensive search process. A Superintendent Search Sub-Committee formed with Peter DeGregorio from Montgomery serving as the Chair. The committee was comprised of five school committee members (Jeana Briggs, Pegg Dragon, Brian Forgue, Lisa Goding and DeGregorio) and another seven advisory members, including Smidy, two prin-

**SUPERINTENDENT**, page 8

## CHESTER

### Hamilton Memorial Library wraps up summer program



This was the final ukulele class of the library's summer music program.

Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., wrapped up its summer music program with their final ukulele class of the season.

It was a joy to see so many young musicians grow. The children also enjoyed a nature walk with Liz Massa of the Hilltown Hikers, who shared fascinating local history and stories of Chester. The library staff is so proud of the children and grateful to everyone who joined them this summer.

The next Book Club on Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 4:30 p.m., when they will discuss "The Berry Pickers" by Amanda Peters. All are welcome.



Children made bracelets during the summer program at Hamilton Memorial Library in Chester. Submitted photos

## BLANDFORD

### Planning Board to use PVPC for consulting work

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

The Wednesday, Aug. 6 Planning Board meeting got off to a late start but began with Select Board Chair Cara Letendre giving a brief presentation on the role of the Planning Board.

She reminded the 30-plus people in attendance that all the board's deci-

sions "are based strictly on state and local regulations. Applications aren't approved or denied based on personal opinions or public pressure, but on the rules that are in place."

Vice Chair Edna Wilander conducted the meeting, bringing two contracts to the board's attention for a vote. The first was with Pioneer Valley Planning

Commission for consulting work. Conservation Commission member Colleen Doyle asked if the board would "reevaluate" the PVPC contract. As a public sector entity, they "push forward agendas" and she added, "you have a very competent board...and I'm not saying you can't go to them on an as-needed basis."

The contract is for

\$5,000 Doyle also said that "when PVPC is involved in towns...is like letting the fox in the henhouse." Doyle also cited instances in other communities PVPC is involved with that have resulted in public opposition to recommended activities.

"The Planning Board in general needs to consider

**BOARD**, page 5

## BLANDFORD

### Water supt. position changed to 40 hours

Special Town Meeting to be held to provide funding

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

At a joint meeting of the Select Board and Water Commissioners Monday, Aug. 4, it was decided to create a 40-hour a week job for a water superintendent with a salary range of \$80-\$85,000 a year.

This was in spite of an initial lack of approval or support on the part of the Water Commissioners, who were concerned about budgetary resources. In a later interview, Chair

"If you could afford a full time, would that be ideal for you? I think so."

— Chair Michael Keier

Michael Keier said that the commissioners had come up with a job description for "up to 21 hours," which was within their salary range and budget. The prior water superintendent "didn't need 40 hours," said Keier.

**WATER**, page 5



Full membership on Planning Board attained for August 6 meeting. Scott O'Connor, Ron Racine, auxiliary member Brian Nimerowski, Greg Garfield, Vice Chair Edna Wilander and Secretary Sara Simpson. Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm



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## HILLTOWNS

# MassDOT announces upcoming I-90 roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces it will be performing overnight and daytime paving and bridge repair operations on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of West Stockbridge, Stockbridge, Montgomery and Russell.

All work is weather dependent and will take place at the following locations and times. In West Stockbridge and Stockbridge, paving operations will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 0.5 to mile marker 5.5 nightly now through Thursday night, Aug. 14 from 7 p.m.-

5:30 a.m., ending Friday morning, Aug. 15.

In Stockbridge, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 2.0 to mile marker 3.0 nightly now through Thursday night, Aug. 14 from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m., ending Friday morning, Aug. 15. In

Montgomery and Russell, on Thursday morning, Aug. 14 from 6 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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

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](http://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.

## HUNTINGTON

# Integrity Trailer opens in Huntington

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON — “We’re looking to serve both the homeowner and the contractor,” explained Jon Groff, owner of Integrity Trailer Sales and Repairs, a new business in the site of the former Smith’s Sled Shop on Route 20.

Located at 38 Russell Road, Integrity Trailer offers a range of sales and services including trailer repairs, parts sales for those who want to do their own work, selling and installing replacement truck beds, installing tow packages and installing strobe or reverse lights for plow contractors and emergency personnel.

Groff grew up in New Jersey where he had worked as a shop foreman for a trailer company. He moved to the hilltowns in 2023 and began to build his own trailer business, starting a repair service at a friend’s garage in Westfield. While growing his business, he also worked for Lafond Septic and drove a bus.

At this new site, people can come to purchase a trailer or have their existing trailers repaired, including replacing lights, bearings or fenders, changing tires, or having welding done. In the entry of the newly refurbished building is a community bulletin board where people are welcome to post their business cards and community notices.

In addition to the store that offers hitches, parts, grease, oils and automotive lubricants, Groff sells lighting, tie downs, straps and

chains. The thoroughly renovated store has a comfortable seating area where customers can wait during repairs. “I want it to be an enjoyable place to do business,” Groff explained.

The business goes beyond trailer sales and services. From a counter indoors, patrons can purchase hand twisted pretzels from a Pennsylvania bakery and fresh roasted coffee beans that are sent from Guatemala by his second cousin. The coffee, he reports, is grown without the use of pesticides. This fall, Groff will add fresh dried mangoes and pineapple, made without sugar or preservatives, to the food options.

Outside, Groff also has an inventory of poly lawn furniture, including adirondack chairs, gliders and outdoor dinette sets. He described these as solid pieces of outdoor furniture that will not rot or require staining. As such, it costs more than wooden furniture. These pieces are made in Pennsylvania from “lumber” made of recycled plastic and using stainless steel screws. This furniture, he said, will last for many years.

Also in the outdoor furniture area are sample fire pits that can be made to order. Along with metal barn art, these are created by a friend using a C & C plasma cutter.

In planning his business, Groff surveyed the area and thought about things that the community would find useful. To that end, he is also opening a U-Haul dealership on this site later this summer. He will rent trucks, vans and trailers and also sell moving supplies and save hilltowners



John Groff and his wife Emily have opened Integrity Trailer Sales and Repairs at their new business located at 38 Russell Road, Huntington.

a trip out of the area. It’s been a big couple of years for Groff. Before planning and opening Integrity Trailers, he moved to the area in 2023 and became a member of the Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship in Russell. “The Mennonite part is not super important,” he said. “Being a Christian is the important part.”

Last December, he married his wife Emily who came to the area after spending four years at a Mennonite mission in Peru. They occupy a home attached to the business and will welcome their first child next February.



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— Thank you! —

A TURLEY PUBLICATION [www.turley.com](http://www.turley.com)

In addition to trailers and related products/services, the business offers poly lawn and patio furniture, some healthy foods, and will open a U-Haul Rental this fall.  
*Turley Publications photos by Wendy Long*

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# FLORENCE

## Florence Bank promotes eight officers to new positions

FLORENCE – The Florence Bank announces the promotion of eight team members.

Sarah Darling of Greenfield was promoted to senior vice president; Tim Deshaies of Holyoke, Elissa Langevin of Wilbraham, Dave Limero of Whately and Erin Prickett of Springfield were named first vice president and Kim Downing of Wilbraham, Alissa Fuller of Ware and Andrew Tulis of Northampton were elevated to vice president.

Darling joined the bank's team in 1985 and has 40 years of banking experience. As the bank's treasurer, she will continue to oversee financial management of the bank and its financial reporting. She currently serves as board member and treasurer for the Lilly Library in Florence.

With 39 years of banking experience, Deshaies manages branch operations to support the bank's strategic goals. He will continue to manage projects, software programs, vendors and branch risk. Deshaies has



Sarah Darling



Tim Deshaies



Elissa Langevin



Dave Limero



Erin Prickett



Kim Downing



Alissa Fuller



Andrew Tulis

a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in business administration from Western New England College.

Langevin joined the bank's team in 2007 and has 40 years of banking experience. As area manager and retail development director, she will continue to oversee the bank's branch managers, providing leadership, employee development and training. She serves as treasurer and board member of the Belchertown Day School.

Limero joined the bank in 2015 and has 16 years of banking experience. Using his skills in project management, expense management, vendor contract negotiation and business process auto-

mation, he will continue to oversee all aspects of corporate project management, IT operations, deposit operations and business intelligence.

Prickett is a 15-year employee of Florence Bank and will continue to oversee and manage the bank's compliance programs and digital banking initiatives, combining strategic thinking with extensive knowledge of banking regulations and a strong background in digital transformation. She has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Connecticut and is a graduate of the New England School for Financial Studies.

With 41 years of bank-

ing experience, Downing oversees the Chicopee Branch and will continue to provide superior professional service to internal and external customers. This includes supporting and training her team and handling mortgage and home equity accounts. She serves as a board member for the Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Holyoke and committee member for The Chicopee Boys and Girls Club.

Fuller joined the bank's team in 2022 and has 25 years of banking experience. She will continue to oversee Florence Bank's overall compliance program and ensures adherence to federal and state regulations as well as

the CRA regulation, which requires the bank to meet the credit needs within the communities it serves, particularly in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Tulis is a 14-year employee of Florence Bank and will continue to be responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations by developing and adhering to policies and procedures that oversee the Bank Secrecy Act program, Anti-Money Laundering program and Office of Foreign Asset Control compliance.

Matt Garrulity, president and CEO of Florence Bank, said, "We are thrilled to announce these well-deserved promotions. They are

all dedicated and valued team members who consistently deliver great results. They have been key assets to the bank for many years."

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield and Springfield. Additionally, it offers 23 ATMs and a wide range of financial services, including investment management through Florence Financial Group to consumers and businesses.

## CHESTERFIELD

### Town wide yard sale set for Sept. 6

CHESTERFIELD – The town wide tag sale will take place Saturday, Sept. 6 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

Rain date is Sunday, Sept. 7; some households will open rain or shine. Sunday hours could be shorter and people may find free piles of left overs.

On Craigslist, people

will find a listing of the homes having sales. A few locations will be hosting multi-families with a variety of items from buttons to wicker for sale. Maps will be available at many houses.

Francine Frenier is organizing the sale and looking for folks who want

to sell their treasures or give things away for free. People may call her can at 413-695-4991 or email at francine.frenier@gmail.com.

There will be 22 locations with a few offering baked goods and lemonade. There is a fundraiser for the Cancer Connection at one of the locations.

## NORTHAMPTON

### Library holds summer reading party

NORTHAMPTON – There's still plenty of time to complete the Summer Reading tracker and pick up a prize at Fobes Library, 20 West St.

Readers of all ages including adults can win a free book and enter fun raffles in the Summer Reading Program, which runs through the end of August.

They may stop by the Children's Desk or the Reference Desk for more information. On Saturday, Aug. 30 from 1-3:30 p.m. there will be an end of summer reading party. This event is open to readers of all ages; all are invited to celebrate a summer of good reading.

Zikina concert will be held on Saturday, Aug.

30 from 2-3:30 p.m. They should bring a lawn chair or blanket.

Zikina is a group of people, who came from across continents and cultures to show that despite all the forces in the world that emphasize the differences and try to pull us apart, they can come together to make something beautiful and new.

### HELP WANTED

Town of Chesterfield

## HIGHWAY DEPT. DRIVER/LABORER

The Chesterfield Highway Department is seeking applications for a full-time position of Driver/Laborer/Heavy Equipment Operator. Interested applicants must have a valid MA Driver's license (CDL Class B required with air brakes endorsement), and have a 2A Hoister's License. Must be able to pass a pre-employment physical examination and drug test.

**See the Town's website for the Job Description,**  
[www.townofchesterfieldma.com](http://www.townofchesterfieldma.com).

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Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God  
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Rev. Dr. Robert Perreault  
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hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com  
Sunday Mornings 10 a.m.

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## OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



## Can my wife get her full spousal benefit at 62 or must she wait?

### Dear Rusty:

I'm 64 and my wife is 62. If my wife starts her own benefit now, she will get about \$700 on her own at 62. I will retire next year and claim Social Security when I am 65. SSA says my wife can draw \$1,100 under spousal benefits, so if she claims now will they give her spousal benefits of \$1,100 or does she need to wait until I claim at age 65 to get the \$1,100?

are permanent, except for normal Cost of Living Adjustments awarded annually thereafter.

Having said all of that, deciding when each of you should claim your Social Security benefit is a matter of financial need, while also considering your life expectancy. If your life expectancy is short and/or you need the money, then claiming early is likely the right decision. But if your life expectancy is longer and you don't urgently need the money, then you might both consider waiting longer to claim a higher monthly amount and get more in cumulative lifetime benefits.

Finally, please remember that whenever SS is claimed before full retirement age, Social Security has an annual earnings test which limits how much can be earned by working while collecting early SS benefits. The earnings limit for 2025 is \$23,400 and, if that is exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit (they take back by withholding future SS payments). FYI, the earnings limit for those who claim SS early changes (increases a bit) yearly and goes away entirely once full retirement age is reached. So, if either or both of you are working, you should evaluate whether claiming your Social Security benefit early (before your respective FRA) is a prudent choice.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

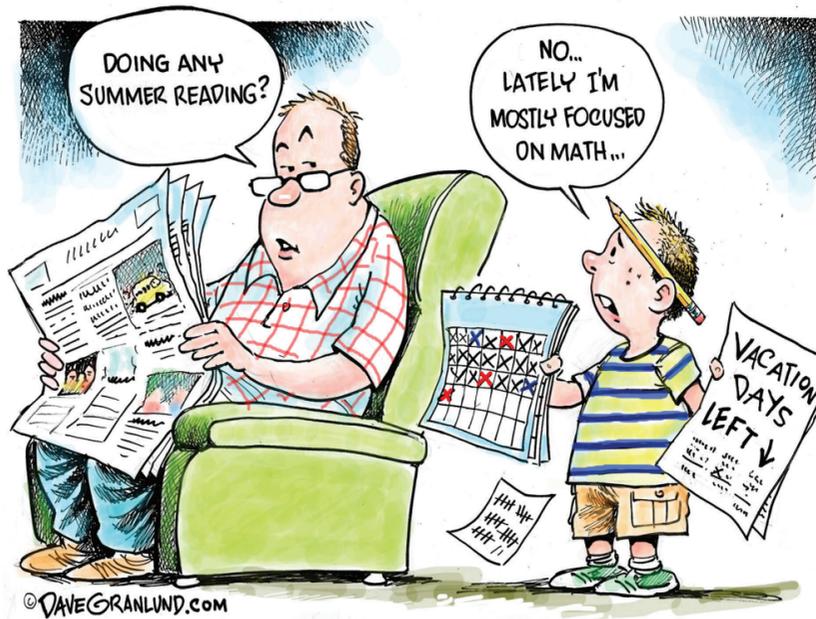
### Signed: Trying to Understand

### Dear Trying:

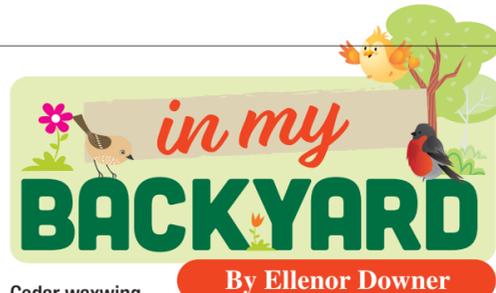
If your wife is now 62, then her Full Retirement Age for Social Security purposes is age 67 and if she claims any SS benefit before reaching her FRA, the amount will be reduced for early claiming. If your wife were to claim now (before you), she would get only her own SS retirement amount (the \$700 amount), and that would be a reduction of about 30% from what she would get if she waited until her FRA to claim.

Your wife cannot get a "spousal boost" (an additional amount as your spouse) until you claim your SS retirement benefit (at age 65). And her benefit as your spouse at that time will also be reduced because she will not have yet reached her FRA. If your wife is already collecting her own SS retirement benefit when you later claim, she will be given her "spousal boost" to make her benefit equal what she is entitled to as your spouse. But her total monthly benefit as your spouse will also be reduced because it will be awarded before her FRA. The only way your wife can get her full spousal benefit from you is to wait until she is 67 to claim Social Security. If she claims any earlier, her monthly amount will be permanently reduced.

FYI, if you plan to claim at age 65, you should also be aware that your full retirement age (FRA) is also age 67 and claiming at age 65 will mean that you will get about 87% of the amount you would get if you waited until age 67 to claim. Again, these reductions



## GUEST COLUMN



Cedar waxwing

My daughter, Paula and family enjoy watching a large flock of cedar waxwings by the bridge near Hardwick Pizza in Gilbertville. They also watch "tons" of bats leave the chimney of the old senior center each night at dusk. Some nights there must be about 50 of them. They fly out and then make big circles around the building while screeching. They do a great job of controlling the mosquitoes population.

The cedar waxwing is one of the few North American birds that specialize in eating fruit.

It can survive on fruit alone for several months. It is a silky smooth songbird with a black mask, tan head and breast, yellow belly and grayish brown under parts. The tail has a yellow band at the tip and some wing feathers have waxy red tips, hence the name waxwing.

Adults perch on high, exposed perches where they are easily seen and heard. They also have a prominent crest. During courtship males and females pass a small fruit or other item back and forth. The cedar waxwing is medium sized and sleek. Their crest often lies flat and droops over the back of the

head. Waxwings are social birds and often seen in flocks year round. They sit in fruiting trees swallowing berries whole or pluck them I mid-air with a brief fluttering hover. They also course over water for insects, "flying like slightly, clumsy swallows."

It takes the female about five to six days to build a nest. They occasionally take nesting materials from other birds nests.

### Helping birds

A reader from South Hadley suggested I include a section about ways to help birds. She even provided several tips for future columns. In hot weather and during dry periods, it is important for birds to have a clean, cool source of water. Even something as simple as putting out a bird bath and water dishes and keeping the water clean and cool during the summer heat will help birds.

Many people don't realize that birds get dehydrated and the bird baths help them keep cool but equally important, maintain the health of their feathers. A bird bath doesn't have to be fancy, even an old ceramic serving dish would work as long as the water isn't too deep. One reader, who sends emails

quite frequently has a more elaborate system with a dripping water.

### South Hadley birds

A South Hadley resident emailed she hears an owl in her neighborhood, but has never seen it. She reported seeing red tailed hawks and turkey vultures. When she sees road kill, she moves it to a safe spot away from traffic so that vultures don't get hit by cars.

### Great blue heron at MacDonalds

Saturday night my daughter, Paula, took the girls to the McDonald's in Ware just as it was getting dark. A great blue heron flew into the parking lot from the river across the street and tried to unsuccessfully land on top of a lamp post. When it couldn't, it flew just a few feet over their heads into the swamp in the back of the parking lot.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing [mybackyard88@aol.com](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

## The Terrifying Tripyramid Slide

By Julie Midura  
Guest Columnist



When you're attempting to hike every trail in all six of the Federally Designated Wilderness areas in the White Mountains, you can't just skip a trail just because it takes you out of your comfort zone.

At 1,200 vertical feet in just half a mile, North Tripyramid Slide is known as one of the steepest trails in New England and is also on the New Hampshire Terrifying 25 hiking list. The granite slide requires hand-

over-hand climbing using 3 points of contact on steep, exposed rock slabs and is not recommended for the descent.

There are actually three potential routes up the slide; left, middle, and right.

The far left route is not the actual slide, but appears to be very popular based on how well-worn the steep dirt path has become over the years. I'm guessing that anyone with an ounce of self-preservation and a strong desire to hug trees chooses this route.

HIKING, page 5

## 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](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com), or call us at 413-283-8393.

Corrections will be printed in the same section where the error originally occurred.

## Country Journal welcomes Election letters to the editor

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to [countryjournal@turley.com](mailto: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.

## Country Journal TEAM



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

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



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## BLANDFORD

## CONSERVATION AREA SPORTS UNIQUE SIGN

## Prayer of the Woods

I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter night, the friendly shade screening you from the summer sun, and my fruit are refreshing draughts quenching your thirst as you journey on. I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table, the bed on which you lie, and the timber that builds your boat. I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead, the wood of your cradle and the shell of your coffin. I am the bread of kindness, and the flower of beauty  
Ye who passes by listen to my prayer  
Harm me not.



This "Prayer of the Woods" is posted at the parking lot for the Carl Herrick Knittel Conservation Area at the end of Herrick Road in Blandford. A Blandford resident suggested the correspondent take a photo of this sign.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

## WATER from page 1

During the meeting, Select Board Chair Cara Letendre thought it to be a 40-hour job. She asked the commissioners present, Keier and Peter Thayer, "if you could afford a full time, would that be ideal for you?" Keier responded, "I think so."

Letendre asked if \$100,000 or more would be sufficient. Keier said for a city that would work, but for Blandford, which has "a smaller system" it would be too much.

Letendre asked if the superintendent position and primary water operator could be wrapped into one, which is possible. Regarding the compensation scale, the board's research came up with \$108,000 and proposed a starting rate of \$85,000. This position would include benefits.

Funds will have to be moved and a Special Town Meeting will have to be held with Monday, Sept. 22 as a new proposed date for the meeting.

## COA honors August birthdays

BLANDFORD – Tom Ackley, Rick Barnard, Lorraine Bean, Leisa Hollings, Barbara Langmore, John Tuttle, Neil MacKinnon, Mary Martin and Sue Racine all have August birthdays

and were recognized at the Council on Aging luncheon Friday, Aug. 8.

Joann Martin's menu included beef chili or turkey chili with corn bread followed by peach cobbler for

dessert.

Breakfast is set for Friday, Aug. 22 at 10 a.m. with blueberry French toast with maple sausage links, sliced melon and Bloody Mary deviled eggs.



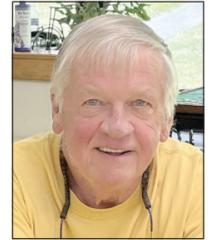
Mary Martin



Leisa Hollings



Barbara Langmore



Neil MacKinnon

## BOARD

from page 1

this..." and she brought up the PVPC 64-page document identifying best locations for solar projects, which included contact information.

"I do not feel PVPC has Blandford's best interest at heart."

After continued discussion the board approved the contract and to use PVPC on an as needed basis. "We will decide as a board...to use them."

The other contract was for a peer review of a solar project at 30 Huntington Road by CEI for \$6,500 to be done in time for the hearing. The board approved unanimously.

The flood plain bylaw was approved at the Annual Town Meeting, but the board is looking for the newly updated flood plain maps. There need to be an additional bylaw to include the maps.

Wilander wanted to make sure everyone has seen the notice from the Town Administrator about upcoming concerns.

There are two Battery Energy Storage Systems, the 50 mega watt adjacent to the Eversource substation is on hold while the 200 megawatt proposed installation is across the street.

The peer review for 89 Chester Road is ready for a possible Sept. 3 hearing.

New board members will get their own town of Blandford email addresses.

O'Connor asked about deadlines and Wilander said the legal is in the loop and is well aware of the deadlines.

Sarah Malanson asked about what happens after the public hearing? Wilander said that the board will take into consideration all the recommendations from

the other boards, residents and information from other towns. "There's a huge amount of information" that goes into the decision-making process.

There will be a Special Town Meeting according to Letendre with three non-binding questions asking if the Town should spend resources fighting Eversource, BESS installations and other solar installations. She said the Select Board will take that vote into consideration. A tentative date is September 22 and will let everyone know when it is firm.

Another resident suggested the town have a plan going forward and not try to do things after the fact. "An organized group" is needed.

Letendre said, "If people work with us it will be more beneficial to the town."



There were over 30 residents who attended the August 6 Planning Board meeting.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

## Volunteer completes basic landscaping of new pavilion



William Hyland of Otis volunteered his time to landscape the new pavilion on the Blandford Fairgrounds.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

BLANDFORD – William Justin Hyland of Otis volunteered his time last week to work on completing landscape basics at the new pavilion on the fairgrounds.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural

Resources awarded the Fair a \$100,000 grant for the its construction located just to the east of the historic Calling Tower, where a performance stage was originally located.

The old stage is gone

and in its place is a new structure that will last a lifetime. The building is 30 feet by 80 feet on a concrete pad. A metal roof and ceiling plus a storage unit at the south end hold the promise for many future events.

## OPINION

## HIKING

from page 4

The far right route is clearly the least used-covered in slick moss, with no trees to grab onto and providing little in the way of traction. I would say this is the route you take when your brain hasn't fully developed yet. Which, 'scientifically' speaking, is anyone under the age of 28.

And the space in between the left and the right? Well, that's the route for those who want to experience the thrill of rock scrambling without the benefit of rope, while still feeling like Spider-Man on the way up.

When Tom and I reached the base of the slide, I told him I wanted to take the dirt path on the left. My 68-year-old husband replied, "I came here to climb a rock-slide, so I'm going to stay to the right."

Now, at 60 years old, I fall somewhere in between the age at which brain cells become fully developed and the age at which they start to decline, so I was completely against taking the moss-covered route on the right. I suggested we compromise and stay on the middle section, which is still part of the slide, but with far less moss, meaning far less chance of plunging to our death.

However, Tom—who is usually the more rational one—was intent on taking the hardest route to the top. Unwilling to stray far from my safety net, I reluctantly followed behind.

Until, that is, my feet began slipping on the wet moss, at which point, I found a small crevice in the granite and slowly worked my way left until I was on the middle section. Tom, however, remained undeterred, and continued up the mountain a couple dozen feet to the right of me.

Although I was relieved to be on dry rock, the middle part of the slope was no less steep. I managed to scramble upward on all fours for about 25 feet, until the angle of the slope became so perilously steep that it was impossible to continue upward. I scanned the smooth granite to the left and right of me, looking for something, anything, to grab onto. I saw nothing. With my toes balancing on a mere half-inch lip in the rock, I didn't have enough momentum to hurl myself upwards. And there was no possibility of down-climbing. I clung to the rock, unable to move in any direction, paralyzed with fear.

The sound of my racing heart assaulted my ears and my arms began shaking. My entire body became drenched in perspiration. Sweat dripped down my face, stinging my eyes, but I dared not pull one hand away from the rock to wipe it away. All rational thought evaporated and panic surged within me with every ragged breath.

Tom attempted to encourage me from his own precarious position. "There's a slight projection on your left," he said. "Trust your trail runners. You got this!"

It was fight or flight, and there was no way to flee. I extended my left hand as far as I could to feel for the slight protrusion Tom was referring to. Once my fingers found it, I took a deep breath, then used every ounce of strength I had in my quaking arms to haul myself up onto a slight depression in the rock above me. I grabbed onto the trunk of a nearby shrub and clung to it in a death-grip while waiting for my heart rate to settle back into a normal rhythm.

Tom, in the meantime, was facing his own set of challenges just twenty feet to my right. He was unable to move upward himself due to how steep the slide had

become. However, unlike me, he has no fear of steep, open rock slabs. He felt the rock below his hands until he found a small split and used the very tips of his fingers to work his way over to me.

Thankfully, the trail soon turned from large, open slabs to loose boulders and gravel. No less physically challenging, but somewhat less mentally demanding. I find that taking a step upward and feeling the mountain slide down below my feet is far less terrifying than scrambling on all fours on a smooth slab of granite.

When we finally reached the top of the slide, Tom and I heaved a sigh of relief. I was filled with jubilation, not only for having completed EVERY trail in the Sandwich Wilderness, but also for making it up the single most terrifying trail we had ever attempted. I did not feel brave, rather, empowered.

I had not overcome my fears, rather I had charged into them with shaking arms and quaking legs. In doing so, I learned that sometimes the fear does not go away, so you just need to do it afraid. And perhaps, just perhaps, that is where courage begins.

See you in the wild places, my friends.



# CHESTER

## LIZ MASSA EXHIBITS AT LITTLEVILLE FAIR



Liz Massa stands by her granite quarry exhibit she displayed at the Littleville Fair the weekend of Aug. 1, 2 and 3. *Turley Publications photo by Deborah Daniels*

## FCC holds Sunday worship

CHESTER – The First Congregational Church of Chester will hold their worship service at 10 a.m. this Sunday. The Gospel reading for the week is Luke 12:32-40. Pastor Susan Borsella will preach about “Expecting the Unexpected.” This is an open and affirming congregation. Everyone is welcome.



The Chester Council on Aging recently held a paint a planter event. This is a display of their planters. *Submitted photos*

## COA lists upcoming events

CHESTER – The Chester Council on Aging located in the lower level of 15 Middlefield Road invites seniors on Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 12:30 p.m., for a Brownie Sundae Party. Then, on Friday, Aug. 22 from 4:30–6:30 p.m., they can get creative at the Paint-a-Martini-Glass event. Seats are limited so people should call 413-354-7735 to reserve a spot.

## MIDDLEFIELD

### Library to host quilt show

MIDDLEFIELD – For those interested in quilting and don't know how to get started come to the Middlefield Public Library located at 188 Skyline Trail, on Thursday, Aug. 21 from 1-4 p.m. for their first ever quilt show. There will be a small display of quilts of all types from hand-stitched to machine-quilted and everything in between including vintage new and quilts-in-progress.

## OTIS

### Roadwork closes section of North Blandford Road

OTIS – Motorists are advised that North Blandford Road between Algeria Road and Lincoln Road will be closed to thru traffic now until possibly Monday, Aug. 18 from 7 a.m.- 3 p.m. for road construction. Motorists should seek an alternate route during that time.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Town of Blandford Conservation Commission Public Notice

At its regularly scheduled public meeting on **Monday, August 25, 2025, at 6:00 PM** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) received from Gibbs Brook, LLC c/o Marco Addonizio of Blue Wave Energy as the Applicant. The RDA is related to the proposed development of a Commercial Solar Array and associated installations. The project location is 30 Huntington Road at Parcels 416- 10, 11, 12. The Conservation Commission will make its determination in accordance with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended).

Project plans and additional information are on record in the Office of the Conservation Commission. Richard Gates, Chair Town of Blandford Conservation Commission 08/14/2025

### Town of Blandford Conservation Commission Public Notice

At its regularly scheduled public meeting on **Monday, August 25, 2025, at 6:00 PM** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) received from Marco Addonizio

of Blue Wave Energy as the Applicant. The RDA is related to the proposed development of a 4.04 MW DC ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array, a battery energy system (BESS), and associated equipment pads. The project location is 89 Chester Road at Parcel 408-19.1. The Conservation Commission will make its determination in accordance with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended).

Project plans and additional information are on record in the Office of the Conservation Commission. Richard Gates, Chair Town of Blandford Conservation Commission 08/14/2025

### Town of Blandford Conservation Commission Public Notice

At its regularly scheduled public meeting on **Monday, August 25, 2025, at 6:00 PM** at the Blandford Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, the Blandford Conservation Commission will consider a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) received from Gregoire Girard as the Applicant. The RDA is related to the proposed construction of a single-family home and associated site improvements with portions of site work located within the buffer zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland. The project location is Crooks Road at Parcel 422-15.1. The Conservation Commission will make its determination in accordance

with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. c 131, Sec. 40 (as amended). Project plans and additional information are on record in the Office of the Conservation Commission. Richard Gates, Chair Town of Blandford Conservation Commission 08/14/2025

### TOWN OF HUNTINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Huntington Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **August 27th, 2025 at 7:30** in the Huntington Town Hall to review a Notice of Intent submitted by Eduard Nudny. The proposed activity is for a Single Family Home and Septic System located at Lot 1 Goss Hill Road, the corner of Goss Hill Road and Kimble Road. This hearing is in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 131 Section 40 of the Wetland Protection Act. The Huntington Conservation Commission 08/14/2025

### LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT TOWN OF HUNTINGTON STANTON AVENUE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – PHASE 1

The Town of Huntington invites sealed Bids for the Stanton Avenue Improvement Project – Phase 1. Sealed bids will be received at the offices of the Pi-

oneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01104 until **2:00 p.m., prevailing time, on Wednesday August 20, 2025** 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, FY24 Huntington Community Development Block Grant Programs.

The Base Bid scope of work includes installation of approximately 1,090 feet of 8-inch ductile iron water main, eleven water service connections, thirteen precast concrete drainage structures, 960 linear feet of 12-inch HDPE drain pipe, 310 linear feet of 8-inch PVC sanitary sewer, one sanitary sewer manhole, trench repair, asbestos cement pipe removal and disposal, and associated work.

The estimated project cost for the Base Bid is **\$677,000**.

Contract Documents, including plans and specifications, may be viewed electronically beginning Wednesday July 30, 2025. Bid Forms and Contract Documents will be available at [www.biddocs.com](http://www.biddocs.com) (may be viewed electronically and downloaded at no cost) or hard copies may be purchased online at [www.biddocs.com](http://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. 08/07, 08/14/2025

### TOWN OF BLANDFORD PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF CONTINUANCE OF JUNE 4, 2025, PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to MGL, Ch. 40A Sec. 9 the Blandford Planning Board will continue its June 4, 2025 Public Hearing at the Blandford Town Offices, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008 at **6:05 pm on Wednesday, August 27, 2025**. This hearing is scheduled under the following Blandford Zoning By-Laws: Section VIII – Ground Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and Section IX – Site Plan Review and Special Permits. The Hearing is to consider the application for a request for a Site Plan Review and Special Permit for Peebles Brook, LLC, solar photovoltaic installation with battery energy storage system, located at 89 Chester Road (Map 108, Parcel 19.1) in Blandford, MA 01008.

The Project proposes the construction of a 4.04 megawatt (MW) direct current (DC) single-axis tracking solar photovoltaic (PV) installation with a battery energy storage system (BESS). The project will involve construction of a gravel access road and minor grading for stormwater management features on 32.6 acres, that is currently zoned as Agricultural.

The completed application and plans are available for public inspection at the Town Offices or on the Town of Blandford's website: <https://townofblandford.com/planning-board-project-details/>

You may also make an appointment to view a hard copy of these forms at the Town Hall by e-mailing the Planning Board Chair at: [planning@townofblandford.com](mailto:planning@townofblandford.com).

Please submit comments, in writing, to the Blandford Planning Board at 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA 01008. Failure to make recommendations on the matter for review shall be deemed lack of opposition thereto.

Edna Wilander, Vice Chair 08/14, 08/21/2024

# EARLY DEADLINES

In observance of LABOR DAY,

## PUBLIC NOTICES

EARLY AD DEADLINE

Place your public notice

no later than NOON

# Thursday, August 28

– Thank you!

*Country Journal*

## OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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

## WORTHINGTON

### Sevenars Academy presents Sparky Quartet on Aug. 17

WORTHINGTON – Sevenars Academy, just off 15 Ireland St., Rte. 112, will present The Sparky Quartet, a Jazz Finale on Sunday, Aug. 17 at 4 p.m.

Now in its third season at Sevenars, the sensational Sparky Quartet, formed in tribute to late master clarinetist Bob Sparkman. Sparkman had long roots at Sevenars starting from Bob's collaborations with treasured pianist and composer Clifton J. "Jerry" Noble, Jr., "Bob and Jerry." With wonderfully versatile bassist Kara Noble, their jazz trio wizardry became a tradition as a Sevenars finale; no season could end without them.

In 2023, after Bob left this world, they brought on board the inimitable Chris Devine on violin and flute and the extraordinary Jon Van Eps on percussion and

became officially the Sparky Quartet. Together they make magic. Clifton Noble, Jr. is admired as composer and pianist throughout the United States and internationally, both as a classical artist and in jazz improvisation. Kara Noble brings her miraculous gifts on guitar, vocals and just about everything else. Chris Devine, brilliant violinist/flutist plays in a multitude of styles and instruments and whose bio includes collaborating with Ritchie Blackmore of Deep Purple. Rounding off the quartet is John Van Eps, multifaceted marimbist, composer, and producer, whose credits include producing remixes of Robert Lamm of Chicago.

They brought the house down in 2024 and will again this year. People may visit [www.chrisdevine.com](http://www.chrisdevine.com) or [www.cliftonjnoblejr.com](http://www.cliftonjnoblejr.com).

There is no required admission cost, however donations are welcome at the door. A \$20 per person is suggested to help defray expenses of maintaining this magnificent historic concert hall and continuing to bring fine music to this idyllic setting. Complimentary refreshments are offered at intermission.

This 2025 season is made possible in part by 13 LCC's (Local Cultural Councils) of the following towns: Amherst, Becket, Blandford, Chesterfield, Goshen, Huntington, Lee, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Westhampton, West Springfield, and Worthington. These LCC's are local agencies that are funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



### Rod and Gun Club to host car show

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Rod and Gun Club's third annual car show, 458 Dingle Road, Rte. 112, to benefit Special Operations Warrior Foundation will take place Saturday, Sept. 20 with gates opening at 8 a.m. Judging will take place

from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and awards at 2 p.m. Rain date is Sunday, Sept. 21.

Vehicles of all years are welcome. Show vehicle is \$10 each and spectators are free.

The first 100 cars will get dash plaques and a goodie bag. Music

is by Back in Time and Westfield Cruisers. Food is available. There will be a Chinese raffle and 50/50 raffle.

Vendors are welcome; 10' x 10' space available for \$20. If interested vendors should email [Worthingtonrgclub@gmail.com](mailto:Worthingtonrgclub@gmail.com).

### COA offers grab and go lunch

WORTHINGTON – On Thursday, Aug. 21 the Council on Aging announces the grab and go lunch will be available for pickup from noon-1 p.m. at Town Hall.

The menu will be a choice of chicken and gravy or beef Wellington with stewed tomatoes, zucchini, dinner roll and fresh fruit. To reserve a meal, people may call or text

413-238-1999 by Sunday, Aug. 17 and give their name, number of meals and the name of the person also receiving the meal and their meal choice.

People should bring a bag with them to carry their meals to their cars. New enrollee applications are available at the Town Hall bulletin board, the COA bulletin board at Corners Grocery or download

by visiting [worthington-ma.us/2015/08/august-grad-n-go-senior-meal/](http://worthington-ma.us/2015/08/august-grad-n-go-senior-meal/). They can also fill one out when they come to pick up their meal.

If they have any questions, they may call Phyllis Dassatti at 413-238-5962. The meals are sponsored by the Worthington Council on Aging and Highland Valley Elder Services.

## PITTSFIELD

### Downtown Pittsfield hosts final summer dance series

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. announces the final dates in a new summer dance series entitled "Rhythmscape" held on Dunham Mall, 100 North St., on Sunday afternoons from 6-8 pm, through Sunday, Aug. 31.

Each session highlights a different rhythm and instructor from our local community, reflecting the many identities that make Pittsfield home. Rhythmscape encourages everyone to experience the joy of movement and the

beauty of cultural exchange. No experience is necessary to participate, and all events are free and open to the public.

Rhythmscape seeks to activate public spaces in Downtown Pittsfield through joyful, inclusive dance and music events that celebrate community, movement, and cultural diversity.

Schedule of Instructors: Sunday, Aug. 17 Breaking with Andres Ramirez, Sunday, Aug 24: Learn the Basics of Chacarera accompanied by Live Percussion

with Micaela Farías and Manu Uriona and

Sunday, Aug. 31 BSKE Dance Community presents Michelle Decepeida with DJ Jeffrey Jay - Beginner and intermediate level Bachata and Salsa lesson with social dancing

This series is supported by MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative Cohort program in partnership with Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and Mill Town Foundation.

More information on

events above:

The sessions on Aug. 17 will feature the fundamentals of Breaking with professional Breakdancer, Andres Ramirez. There will be an Opening Dance Cypher, Student Performance featuring dancers from The Funk Box Dance Studio, and a Community Dance Class open to all ages and levels focusing on the fundamentals of Breaking, covering elements such as Toprock and Footwork.

At the Aug. 24 ses-

sion, discover the soul of Argentina through chacarera, a lively folk rhythm born in the rural provinces of northern Argentina.

Rooted in centuries of cultural fusion, chacarera blends indigenous, Spanish, Latin, and African influences into a joyful, earthy dance that can be enjoyed in pairs, in groups, or solo.

In this special Rhythmscape session, Micaela Farías will guide us through movements that awaken the body and ground

the spirit, while Manu Uriona accompanies live on traditional drums - bringing the rhythm to life in real time.

This is more than a dance class - it's an invitation to connect with your roots, awaken ancestral memory, and experience meditative movement through sound and tradition.

At the Aug. 31st session, the BSKE Dance Community will host Latin Dance lessons with Michelle Decepeida accompanied by DJ Jeffrey Jay.

## STOCKBRIDGE

### Lauren Bailey to exhibit ceramics

STOCKBRIDGE – The Berkshire Art Center, in partnership with the historic Red Lion Inn, presents ceramic artist Lauren Skelly Bailey as its current Artist-in-Residence, now through Sept. 1.

Known for her richly textured ceramic sculptures that reference coral reefs, marine environments and natural cycles of transformation, Skelly Bailey brings a contemporary twist to traditional vessel forms-fusing history, surface and material innovation.

During her residency, Skelly Bailey is developing a new body of work inspired by the colors and character of the Red Lion Inn itself. Her

signature coral-like surfaces-layered, vibrant, and gestural are

applied to reimagined vessel shapes, connecting the past and present through clay. All works are completed at the Berkshire Art Center and will be exhibited throughout the Red Lion Inn, creating a unique dialogue between heritage and contemporary craft.

Visitors are invited to engage directly with the artist in her studio, located at the Berkshire Art Center, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. now through the end of the residency. Guests are

welcome to observe the creative process, ask ques-

tions, view completed works and learn more about Skelly Bailey's unique approach to ceramics.

The artist is also offering informal tours of her installed works throughout the Inn and welcomes conversation, feedback and community interaction as part of her process. All works are available for

purchase through the Berkshire Art Center, supporting both the artist and the local creative economy.

This residency offers a rare opportunity to witness the evolution of site-specific ceramic work in real time-where tradition meets experimentation, and where every piece tells a story shaped by

place and process.

Lauren Skelly Bailey is also teaching a workshop at the Berkshire Art Center: Cold Glaze Applications on Saturday, Sept. 20 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Citizens' Hall, Stockbridge. Cold glaze applications that can be used on ceramics, wood, sculpture, and mixed-media artworks will be explored. Students will bring a piece from home to experiment with acrylics, flock, chrome, and resins. Students can register here to secure their spot for this exciting workshop.

For more information or to schedule a visit, people may email the Berkshire Art Center at [info@berkshireart-center.org](mailto:info@berkshireart-center.org).

## MONTEREY

### Bidwell House Museum to host online program

MONTEREY – On Saturday, Aug. 23 at 11 a.m. Bidwell House Museum, 100 Art School Road, will offer an online program on the Battle of Louisbourg with Professor Amy Watson. Members are free and non-member are \$15.

Only one registration is required per household. Lecture will be held via Zoom at 11 a.m.

This will be the last history talk of the 2025 season with Dr. Amy Watson, from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

In 1745, New England colonists launched a successful expedition to conquer Louisbourg, a port in present-day Nova Scotia,

which was then controlled by the French Empire. The original owner of the Bidwell House, Reverend Adonijah Bidwell, was witness to this battle as the Chaplain of the fleet. In this talk, Dr. Amy Watson will explain why New Englanders launched this invasion of a frigid Canadian port, why they were forced to return it and what the Siege of Louisbourg can tell us about both British party politics and the origins of the American Revolution.

This lecture will be held via Zoom. Registration via the Museum event page is required, <https://www.bidwellhousemuseum.org/event/the-battle-of-louisbourg/>

### Berkshire Botanical Garden presents a free Spanish-language tour

STOCKBRIDGE – The Berkshire Botanical Garden, 5 West Stockbridge Road, will host a free Spanish-language garden tour and salsa dance lesson on Sunday, Sept. 7 from 5-8 p.m.

Start the evening with food and drinks, then enjoy a self-guided Spanish audio

tour through the gardens. After the tour, participants can join a salsa dance lesson and party led by Luana Dias David, a Brazilian performing artist, choreographer and cultural educator whose dynamic style blends the energy of Afro-Latin dance with elements of Samba, Capoeira,

ballet, jazz, and breakdancing. Luana Dias David of Berkshire Brazil Entertainment will lead the salsa dance lesson. She was born in São Paulo and carries over 20 years of international experience, performing and teaching across Europe, Asia and the Americas. Her art-

istry is deeply rooted in the rhythms of Samba, Capoeira and Latin dance, shaped by her training in classical ballet, jazz and breakdancing.

Admission is free. People may visit [BerkshireBotanical.org](http://BerkshireBotanical.org) to RSVP or for more information.

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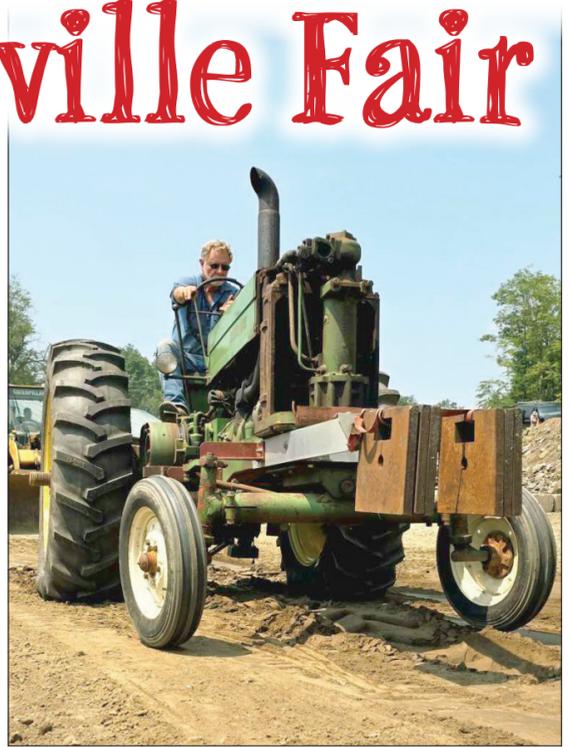
# Western Mass Tractor Pullers show at Littleville Fair



Liz Massa wheels up on her Farmall tractor.



George Randall of Granby on his Friday tractor.



Myron Marcoulier on a John Deere gets a great hook.



This modified Allis Chalmers driver gets ready to pull. An antique John Deere tractor is seen to the right.

The Western Mass Tractor Pullers Association put on a good show competing for medals at the Littleville Fair in Chester this past Sunday on the track.

The club pulls both antique and modified tractors including ten stock classes on both stone boats and transfer sleds. Based in Westfield, the Tractor Pullers are one of the longest running non-profit organizations in Western Massachusetts and hold pulls every year, completely volunteer run.

Ray Reed and Mary Johnson are always at the head of the track; they recently got married. All tractors and pullers are always welcome to join in on the pulls.

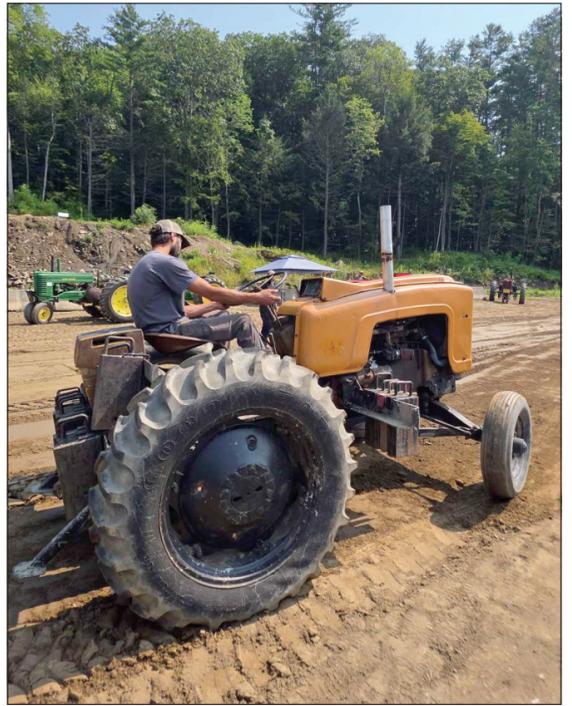
Board members are a few familiar Hilltown Folks: Cliff Clark Jr., Bryan Mansfield, Paul Pappas, Ray Reed and Don York. People may visit [www.western-masstractorpullers.com](http://www.western-masstractorpullers.com) to sell all the information including schedule and rules.



Paul Pappas pulls the stone boat on his 1951 Farmall H. Submitted photos



Cliff Clark Jr. of Williamsburg pulls the stone boat on his John Deere.



A tractor puller gets ready to pull at the Littleville Fair last Sunday, Aug. 3.

## WESTFIELD

### Westfield Athenaeum announces trip to Peabody Essex Museum

WESTFIELD – The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem is currently showing the exhibit, "Making History: 200 Years of American Art from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts."

On Thursday, Sept. 11 the Westfield Athenaeum, 6 Elm St., will host a trip to see this major exhibit. Participants will also have the opportunity to explore the downtown of Salem, which features a number of interesting shops, restaur-

ants and historical sites. Guy McLain, Director of the Westfield Athenaeum, will present an introductory lecture on American art and the history of the Pennsylvania Academy.

Anyone wishing to go on the trip should visit the Circulation Desk at the Athenaeum or visit their website at [Westath.org](http://Westath.org) to obtain a ticket. The cost of transportation and admission to the museum is \$95. The bus will depart at 9 a.m. and will

return to Westfield at approximately 7 p.m. The number of tickets available is limited, so anyone interested should obtain a reservation as soon as possible. Tickets are available now at the Circulation desk at the Athenaeum or online beginning Aug. 12.

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was founded in 1805 as the Country's first museum and fine arts school. The institution was founded by two prominent artists at the time,

Charles Wilson Peale and William Rush. The Academy was very progressive for the times, accepting women artists at annual exhibitions as early as 1811. May Howard Jackson became the first African-American artist to exhibit there in 1895. In the 20th century, the Academy became a center for the education of American artists.

Throughout the history of the institution the Academy collected works of art by American art-

ists, assembling one of the most significant collections of American masterpieces in the Country. This exhibit will feature some of the Academy's most important examples of history paintings, portraiture, still life scenes, and landscapes. Hudson River School paintings, like those of Thomas Moran, will illuminate issues related to the American dialogue with the natural world. The works of artists like Childe Hassam

and Mary Cassatt will show the influence of French Impressionism. And finally, the paintings of Arthur Dove and Sonia Sekula will reflect the impact of Modernism on American art in the 20th century. Many of the featured paintings will allow visitors to see and make connections across time and place and will demonstrate how American art created narratives around social and political issues at different points in our nation's history.



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**Town of Blandford**  
Town of Blandford is hiring a **PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** to the Assessors. Duties include administrative support for daily operations of the Assessors' office. Pay: \$18-\$20/hr, based on experience. Communication, customer service, organizational, and tech skills required. Send cover letter and resume to: [dhopson@townofblandford.com](mailto:dhopson@townofblandford.com).

**HELP WANTED**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WILBRAHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY**

The Wilbraham Housing Authority seeks highly qualified applicants for the position of Executive Director. Responsibilities include the administration of 69 Chapter 667 Elderly housing units and 9 Chapter 705 Family housing units. The Executive Director reports to a five-member Board of Commissioners. Work schedule shall be a minimum of 22 hours per week during normal business hours, flexible as needed. The estimated salary range \$46,177.00 To \$54,326.00 is based on the Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities' Executive Director Salary Schedule. The ideal candidate must have two years' experience in a housing, community development, public administration or a closely related field. Knowledge of the principles and practices of housing management, finances and maintenance systems in public or private housing. Excellent written and verbal communication skills required. Willingness to work with people of various socio-economic backgrounds. Must be bondable. Certification as a Public Housing Manager from an approved organization desired, and may be substituted as a property manager or similar classification by a nationally recognized housing or real estate organization such as an EOHLA-approved Massachusetts Public Housing Administrator Certification Program or HUD. Two-year full time post-secondary education in a related field may substitute for up to one year of experience. Applications will be accepted until 12pm, August 29, 2025. Please submit cover letter, resume and contact information for 3 references to: **Mr. Peter Manolakis, Chairman Executive Director Search Committee, Wilbraham Housing Authority, 88 Stony Hill Road, Wilbraham, MA 01095. Contact: Peter Manolakis (413) 519-8195**  
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## Red Cross lists donor opportunities

BOSTON — During National Wellness Month, the American Red Cross encourages people to prioritize their personal health and well-being while helping to save lives with a blood or platelet donation.

Donors of all blood types - especially those with type O positive or B negative blood - are asked to make an appointment now to prevent a further drop in donor turnout. In August, the Red Cross will provide free A1C screening - a test commonly used to screen for prediabetes and diabetes for all donors who make a successful blood, platelet or plasma donation. Fasting is not required for this test, and donors will be able to view their con-

fidential results one to two weeks after their donation in the Blood Donor App or their donor account at RedCrossBlood.org. Donors will receive one A1C test result in a 12-month period.

People may schedule a time to give now by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App. Those who come to give Aug. 1-28, 2025, will receive a \$15 e-gift card to a merchant of choice. For details on both offers, visit RedCrossBlood.org/Test.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities at the Springfield Blood Donation Center, 150 Brookdale Drive, Springfield include: Saturday, Aug. 16 from 8:30

a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Sunday, Aug. 17 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Monday, Aug. 18 from noon-7 p.m.; Tuesday, Aug. 19 from noon-7 p.m.; Wednesday, Aug. 20 from noon-7 p.m.; Friday, Aug. 22 from 8:45 a.m.-3:45 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 23 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Sunday, Aug. 24 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; Monday, Aug. 25 from noon-7 p.m.; Tuesday, Aug. 26 from noon-7 p.m.; Wednesday, Aug. 27 from noon-7 p.m.; Friday, Aug. 29 from 8:45 a.m.-3:45 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 30 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 31 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call

1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.



Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

## State awards internet access grants

BOSTON — The Healey-Driscoll administration and Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Massachusetts Broadband Institute awarded \$31,548,018 to four internet service providers to increase internet access for affordable and public housing residents statewide.

MBI provided the funds through the state's Residential Retrofit Program, which expands reliable, high-speed internet service by addressing inadequate wiring and infrastructure through grants to qualified ISPs. This round of grant funding will modernize internet access in more than 13,700 housing units across Massachusetts, including the installation of fiber-optic or CAT6 internet infrastructure, customer home-based equipment, and Wi-Fi service to residences in 60 municipalities across the state. The upgrades aim to increase connectivity, reduce cost burdens and improve digital access for low-income resi-

dents.

"This program is about enhancing broadband connectivity for residents statewide," said Massachusetts Interim Economic Development Secretary Ashley Stolba. "With this funding, we're making sure low-income residents have the same access to essential services, opportunities, and tools as everyone else, leading to a more connected and advanced economy."

"Public and affordable housing residents deserve the same level of connectivity as everyone else," said Massachusetts Broadband Institute Director Michael Baldino. "This funding helps level the playing field and connects families to everything from telehealth to remote learning."

The Residential Retrofit Program is funded by U.S. Treasury's Capital Projects Fund through the American Rescue Plan Act. The program prioritizes projects in federally designated Qualified Census Tracts and

properties with high percentages of deed-restricted affordable housing.

Local recipients are: Beacon Residential Management Limited Partnership of Easthampton 60 housing units

Beacon Residential Management Limited Partnership of Pittsfield 120 housing units

The Community Builders Inc. of Easthampton 40 housing units

The Community Builders Inc. of Northampton 33 housing units

The Community Builders Inc. of Westfield 46 housing units

Westfield Housing Authority of Westfield 441 housing units

Great Barrington Housing Authority of Great Barrington 31 housing units

Great Barrington Housing Authority of Housatonic 50 housing units

Stockbridge Housing Authority of Stockbridge 53 housing units

## Art Center holds oral history project

BECKET — The Becket Art Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will launch its Becket stories oral history/storytelling project on Thursday, Aug. 28 from 5-7 p.m.

This evening of storytelling and coaching will

focus on the people, places and events that capture the experience of living in Becket. If participants are interested, their stories will be recorded at a later date and included in the oral history project. These stories,

supported by related pictures, documents and other artifacts, will ultimately be posted on the Becket Arts Center website. For more information and registration, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

## Gas prices increase three cents

WEST WOOD — Northeast pump prices are nudging upwards alongside an uptick in gasoline demand and tightening inventories.

Energy Information Administration data released last week showed gasoline demand continues to crawl out of a post-July Fourth slump, rising last week by 185,000 barrels a day over the prior week to 9.15 million barrels a day, a figure roughly in-line with seasonal expectations, but still 100,000 barrels a day below the comparable week last year.

The EIA also reported a decline in domestic gasoline stocks last week, which reached a two-month low. The largest declines were seen here in the Northeast, where regional supplies fell by 1.8 million barrels to 57.9 million barrels. Despite the drawdowns, Northeast supplies are still considered to

be at comfortable levels and sit above the 56.2 million barrels that were in storage this time last year.

"After demand for gasoline fell short of expectations in the weeks following July Fourth, recent readings are much more summer-like," said Mark Schieldrop, senior spokesperson for AAA Northeast. "The stronger demand, coupled with tighter supply, has put some upward pressure on pump prices."

The average gas price in Massachusetts is up three cents from last week (\$3.04), averaging \$3.07 per gallon. Today's price is a penny higher than a month ago (\$3.06) and 39 cents lower than this day last year (\$3.46). Massachusetts' average gas price is eight cents lower than the national average.

AAA Northeast's Aug. 4 survey of fuel prices found

the current national average up a penny from last week (\$3.14), averaging \$3.15 per gallon. Today's national average price is the same as a month ago (\$3.15) and 32 cents lower than this day last year (\$3.47).

Today, Mississippi and Oklahoma have the lowest prices in the nation at \$2.70 and \$2.72, respectively. California and Hawaii hold the highest prices in the nation this week at \$4.49 and \$4.44 respectively. Massachusetts holds the 26th place on the list of highest gas prices in the nation.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing nearly 6.8 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, financial and auto-related services.

## Berkshire Pride and Trans Exchange host Back-to-School event Aug. 24

Berkshire Pride and Berkshire Trans Exchange are teaming up once again for a gender-affirming Back-to-School event on Sunday, Aug. 24 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

This free event is all about making sure LGBTQ+

youth feel supported, celebrated and ready to head into the school year with confidence. There will be a gender-affirming clothing exchange, book swap for all ages, free backpacks and school supplies, haircuts

and manicures, community resource tables and snacks and support. Parents and students can connect and celebrate the new school year. For location details, people should email info@berkshirepride.org.

## WILLIAMSTOWN

## Clark to hosts guided sculpture tour

WILLIAMSTOWN — On Saturday, Aug. 30 at 1 p.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., presents the final installment in its free Ground/work 2025: A Close Look discussion series.

Through guided conversation and reflection, participants in these events consider how each artist's work is in active dialogue with the Clark's natural environment.

On August 30, a Clark educator leads a close examination and in-depth discussion around the out-

door sculpture Coata III by Mexican architect Javier Senosiain. The artist, the leading proponent of organic architecture in Mexico, creates animate structures of polychrome glass mosaic, rooted in Mesoamerican mythology but exemplifying the power of pure imagination.

Ground/work 2025 is a year-long exhibition of monumental sculpture featuring specially commissioned works located across the Clark's campus.

Through the work of six international artists, the exhibition explores global conceptions of craft, defined as the physical process by which artists transform the world around them. Each of the participating artists exemplifies how artisanal traditions can be reinvented to generate contemporary form and meaning. The Ground/work 2025 artists are: Yo Akiyama (Japan), Laura Ellen Bacon (United Kingdom), Aboubakar Fofana (Mali), Hugh Hayden

(United States), Milena Naef (Germany), and Javier Senosiain (Mexico).

Ground/work 2025 is organized by the Clark Art Institute and curated by independent scholar Glenn Adamson.

This requires a moderate hike on uneven and occasionally steep terrain. It will be held rain or shine; extreme weather cancels the event. For more information and individual meeting sites, people may visit clarkart.edu/events.

## Free parent gallery tours

WILLIAMSTOWN — On Saturday, Sept. 6 at 10:15 a.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., kicks off its 2025-26 series of gallery tours designed specifically for new parents/caregivers and their infants.

Participants should meet at the Clark's main admissions desk. On the first Saturday of the month, September through June, a Clark educator leads an informal, baby-friendly tour of the permanent collection. The program aims

to provide a stress-free experience for new parents and caregivers, as well as the chance to socialize with others caring for young infants. Works by a variety of artists are featured.

This free program is best suited for adults with pre-toddlers. Strollers and front-carrying baby carriers are welcome. For more information, people may visit clarkart.edu/events.

The next New Parents Gallery Tour takes place on Saturday, Oct. 4 at 10:15 a.m.

## Clark Art Institute presents gallery talk

WILLIAMSTOWN — On Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 11:30 a.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., presents Reflections, a free monthly gallery experience during which visitors are invited to look contemplatively as they engage with works of art from the Clark's collection.

Participants meet in the Museum Pavilion. With a gentle tone that encourages investigation and audience participation, the

group explores one or two artworks with the help of a Clark educator, working together to explore its meaning, find understanding and raise questions. Distinct from a conventional gallery tour, Reflections provides an opportunity for close looking and introspection.

Advance registration required; capacity is limited. For more information and to register, people may visit clarkart.edu/events.

## 'America's Grand Tour' takes place Aug. 20



WILLIAMSTOWN — On Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 1 p.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., presents "America's Grand Tour," the fourth in a free, new summer series of free curatorial talks highlighting rarely exhibited prints, drawings and photographs from the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper's unique collection.

This event takes place in the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper, located in the Manton Research Center. In response to

Europe's Grand Tour, nineteenth-century American writers, artists and poets embarked on their own coming-of-age trek through New England's natural wonders and pastoral landscapes.

Join Hannah Chew, works on paper intern from the Williams College/Clark Graduate Program in the History of Art, for a showcase of American prints and drawings that follows this "Northern Tour" through the Berkshires, Niagara Falls, and more.

The next talk in this series, "Turner at 250," takes place on Aug. 27 at 1 p.m. and is presented by Anne Leonard, Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.

Capacity and seating are limited. People may visit clarkart.edu/events for more details.

The Manton Study Center for Works on Paper is located next to the Berenice Abbott's Modern Lens exhibition in the Manton Research Center.



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