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Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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HUNTINGTON

Select Board tackles lengthy agenda

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The agenda of the Wednesday, Aug. 14 meeting of the Huntington Selectboard included six appointments and an additional one had been postponed, seven discussion topics and approval and signatures on another 11 items.

All three Select Board members, Roger Booth, Bill Hathaway and John McVeigh and Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin were present.

The postponement of their 5 p.m. agenda item reviewing the Age & Dementia Friendly Community Assessment and Plan allowed the board to press through their required paperwork, including signing payroll, warrant articles and minutes.

SELECT BOARD, page 8



Huntington Highway Superintendent Brad Curry and his Administrative Assistant Ashley Fickett met with the Selectboard on Aug. 14. Fickett will continue this part time role, with some hours worked from home, while taking another job weekdays.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

WORTHINGTON

Rod and Gun Club to hold car show benefit

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Rod and Gun Club, 458 Dingle Road, Route 112, will hold their second annual car show benefit Special Operations Warrior Foundation on Saturday, Sept. 21 with gates opening at 8 a.m.

Judging will be from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and awards at 2 p.m. The rain date is Sunday, Sept 22. Spectator are free; cost for show vehicle is \$10. Vehicles of all years are welcome. The first 50 get dash plaques and the first 100 receive a goodie bag from Summit Racing.

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

Vendors are welcome. A 10 foot by 10 foot space is \$20. To reserve a space they may email Worthingtonrgclub@gmail.com. For more information, people may visit www.worthingtonrgclub.com.

HUNTINGTON

Third continuance gravel pit hearing held Aug. 13

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The third continuance hearing on a proposed gravel pit in Huntington took place on Tuesday, Aug. 13.

About 50 area residents attended and Zoning Board of Appeals chair Karon Hathaway and members Dersa Helems, Jill Rose and Victoria Minella-Sena were present. Presenting in support of the project were civil engineer Ron Levesque of R. Levesque Associates in Westfield, property owner Bill Hull and attorney Michael Pill, who, ironically, represented many of these same abutters, who successfully fought a 2015 effort to establish a series of gravel pits on the same property. Speaking for Hilltown Sand and Gravel of Huntington, who would operate the gravel pit and sell the materials at their retail business on Route 112, was



Hilltown Sand & Gravel was represented by Dennis Nolt at the public hearing on a proposed gravel pit, who discussed the products that they sell as ZBA Chair Karon Hathaway looks on.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

Dennis Nolt. Hull also brought a stenographer to take a record of the hearing.

Karon Hathaway called

GRAVEL, page 9

CHESTER

Chester still under boil water order

Filtration at treatment plant replaced

By Kathryn Koegel
Correspondent

CHESTER – Progress has been made in the purification of Chester drinking water, which has been

under a Boil Water Order from Mass DEP since July 24.

"The re-sanding of all three filters has been completed as of Aug. 16," said Chester water commissioner Bob Daley. "We don't have the capability to

WATER, page 9

CUMMINGTON FAIR RUNS AUG. 22 TO AUG. 25



The Cummington Fair, the biggest of the Hilltowns' agricultural events, runs from Thursday, Aug. 22 through the Sunday, Aug. 25. In addition to the popular rides and animal exhibits, the demolition derby is Friday, Aug. 23 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Aug. 24 at 6 p.m.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

BLANDFORD

Mother bear and cubs visit feeders



This mother bear was not to be undone by the higher than usual bird feeders in Blandford. She wanted food for her cubs.

Submitted photo by Margit Mikuski



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HILLTOWNS

MassDOT announces I-90 roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces crews will be conducting nighttime and daytime paving, guardrail and bridge repair work at various locations on I-90 eastbound and westbound during the week of Monday, Aug. 19 through Friday, Aug. 23.

Lane closures will be in place during the construction operations, and traffic will be able to travel through the work zones. In Otis and Blandford paving operations will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 21.0 to 26.0 now through Thursday night, Aug. 22 from 6 p.m.-6 a.m. the next morning. The work is expected to conclude on Friday, Aug. 23 by 6 a.m.

Bridge work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 22.5 now through Thursday night, Aug. 22 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. the next morning. The work is expected to conclude on Friday, Aug. 23 by 5 a.m.

In Stockbridge and West Stockbridge bridge and guardrail work will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 2.0 to 4.5 now through Thursday night, Aug. 22 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. the next morning. The work is expected to conclude on Friday, Aug. 23 by 5 a.m.

Bridge and guardrail work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 1.0 to 3.0 on Thursday night, Aug. 22, from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 23.

Bridge repair work will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 5.5 to 6.5 from Monday night, Aug. 19, through Thursday night, Aug. 22, from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. the next morning. The work is expected to conclude on Friday, Aug. 23 by 5 a.m.

Bridge repair work will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 2.0 to 3.0 on Thursday night, Aug. 22 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 23.

Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work area.

Drivers traveling through the affected areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution.

All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real-time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions. Dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions. Follow @MassDOT on X (formerly known as Twitter) to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

Springfield Symphony Chorus holds auditions

HOLYOKE – The Springfield Symphony Chorus is holding auditions for new members on Tuesday evenings, Sept. 3, 10, and 17 at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Holyoke.

This is a chance to join a dynamic group of talented voices and perform with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra

Interested singers should email Chorus President, Claire Folini, at sschoruspresident@gmail.com with their contact information in order to schedule an audition. Auditions are painless, but please prepare a short piece in one of the preferred languages and be ready for

some vocal exercises and sight reading.

Auditions are now open for the Springfield Youth Sinfonia, Springfield Youth Orchestra and, new this year Springfield Youth Camerata, a strings-only ensemble for beginner to intermediate students up to grade 8.

Youths may submit a video audition by Wednesday, Aug. 28 and join the group that fits their level. It is open to young musicians up to age 19. For more details or to register, people may visit the website or email Youth Orchestra Manager, Rocío Mora, at rmora@SpringfieldSymphony.org.

NAMI to hold family education program

HOLYOKE – National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts offers their NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program in person, starting Tuesday, Sept. 10 from 6-8:30 p.m. in Greenfield.

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, one-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program. This means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have been there and includes presentations,

discussions and interactive exercises. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental health conditions. NAMI Western Massachusetts is an affiliate of NAMI Mass. NAMI Western Massachusetts and its dedicated volunteers, members, and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, and support programs for people in the community living with mental health conditions and their loved ones.

Pre-registration is required. For more information, people may email Susan Sharbaugh at suesharbaugh@gmail.com or visit namiwm.org/support.

Clean Water Trust Board of Trustees announces loan and grant recipients

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust’s Board of Trustees approved \$238,758,657 in new low-interest loans and grants at its meeting on July 10, 2024.

The Trust, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, helps communities build or replace water infrastructure that enhances ground and surface water resources, ensures the safety of drinking water, protects public health and develops resilient communities. It accomplishes these objectives by providing low-interest loans and grants to cities, towns and water utilities through the


Massachusetts State Revolving Funds.

The SRF programs are partnerships between the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. SRFs function like an environmental infrastructure bank by financing water infrastructure projects in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Pittsfield will receive a \$1 million loan for the Pittsfield Sewer System Evaluation Survey phase 22%

The Housatonic Water Works received a \$15,000, Southampton a \$30,000 and Southwick a \$27,765 grant for cybersecurity improvement grant.

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Be sure to include the following with photograph. Deadline September 4, 2024:

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Bride’s Town Residence: _____

Groom’s Name: _____

Groom’s Town Residence: _____

Wedding Date: _____

Wedding Location: _____

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HILLTOWNS

Sheriff Nick Cocchi receives Distinguished Citizen Award

The Western Massachusetts Council-Boy Scouts of America's mission is to help youth develop strong character, become self-reliant and provide them with the skills they need to be successful in life.

As the Boy Scouts of America prepare to launch a new chapter in its storied history, highlighting their inclusivity and embracing a new identity as Scouting America, the Western Mass. Council stands at the forefront, already embodying these progressive changes. This year, the Council is proud to honor Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi with the Distinguished Citizen Award on Thursday, Sept. 19 at the Log Cabin in Holyoke, recognizing his outstanding contributions to the community and his role in shaping a brighter, more prosperous future for people leaving his correctional facilities.

The award comes 15 years after Sheriff Cocchi's predecessor and mentor, retired Sheriff Michael J. Ashe Jr., received the same honor for his revolutionary approach to corrections, which changed the field across the nation.

Sheriff Cocchi's leadership, expansion of Sheriff Ashe's holistic approach to corrections and his unique approach to community engagement have garnered national attention. Under his guidance, the Hampden County Sheriff's Office has been recognized as a model for best practices in corrections, community policing, and public service. His commitment to

rehabilitation, education, and re-entry programs has transformed the lives of countless individuals, fostering a safer and more supportive community environment.

The award acknowledges not only Sheriff Cocchi's achievements in law enforcement but also his dedication to community service and his active involvement in various local initiatives. His efforts align with Scouting America's evolving mission to cultivate a spirit of inclusivity and civic responsibility among youth. As the organization continues to grow and adapt, the Western Mass.

Council's recognition of Sheriff Cocchi underscores the importance of leadership and service in building a better society for all.

"I am humbled and honored to be recognized by a group that shares the same ideals as the Sheriff's Office as we work to make our community a better place, one person at a time," said Sheriff Cocchi.

"But this award is really recognition of my staff, as they work day after day to empower people to help themselves, their families and all of Western Massachusetts in the process."

State Senator John Velis will serve as Master of Ceremonies for the Distinguished Citizens Award Dinner. To learn more about the Distinguished Citizens Award Dinner event in honor of Sheriff Cocchi, people may visit www.wmascouting.org/2024DCAD.

Curators to speak on Impressionist movement

WILLIAMSTOWN – On Sunday, Sept. 15 at 2 p.m., the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., hosts a conversation between Mary Morton, Head of the Department of French Paintings at the National Gallery of Art and co-curator of the Gallery's Paris 1874: The Impressionist Moment exhibition, and Michelle Foa, Associate Professor of Art History at Tulane University and co-curator of the Clark's Edgar Degas: Multi-Media Artist in the Age of Impressionism exhibition.

This free event takes place in the Manton Research Center auditorium. Morton and Foa explore how their respective exhibitions, both of which mark the 150th anniversary of the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874, encourage visitors to see aspects of Impressionism in a new light. They also discuss the state of Impressionist studies today.

Morton serves as Head of the

Department of French Paintings at the National Gallery of Art and is the co-curator of the Gallery's Paris 1874: The Impressionist Moment exhibition. She is an acclaimed international expert on Impressionism. In 2018, the French government named her a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters.

Foa serves as Associate Professor of Art History at Tulane University and is the co-curator of the Clark's Edgar Degas: Multi-Media Artist in the Age of Impressionism exhibition. She is Vice President of the National Committee for the History of Art and on the organizing committee for the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art (CIHA) quadrennial conference in 2028. She was a Florence Gould Foundation Fellow at the Clark in the spring of 2024.

Accessible seats are available; for information, people may call 413-458-0524.

Gas prices decrease two cents

WESTWOOD– Northeast gas prices continue to slide ahead of the Labor Day holiday on a mix of positive and negative economic reports from both stateside and abroad.

Domestically, reports of stronger-than-expected consumer spending data and lower inflation figures led to a surge in oil prices early last week on increasing expectations of interest rate cuts in the short term. The enthusiasm caused the price for a barrel of oil to jump by more than \$3 on Monday, the largest single-day increase in more than a year.

But by Friday, nearly all the gains in crude oil prices evaporated after Chinese authorities reported a string of weaker economic indicators, quelling optimism about future growth in global oil and gas demand from the world's largest importer of oil. The worries far outweighed market concerns about ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

The average gas price in Massachusetts is down four cents over last week (\$3.42), averaging \$3.40 per gallon. Today's price is 10 cents lower than a month ago (\$3.50) and 37 cents

lower than this day last year (\$3.77). Massachusetts's average gas price is a penny lower than the national average.

"Despite market volatility on conflicting global economic data, pump prices are trending down as domestic production and supply of gasoline continues to meet demand," said Mark Schieldrop, Senior Spokesperson, AAA Northeast. "Here in the Northeast, inventories of gasoline are substantially above last year's levels to the tune of nearly 4 million barrels."

AAA Northeast's Aug. 19 survey of fuel prices found the current national average down three cents from last week (\$3.44), averaging \$3.41 a gallon. Today's national average price is nine cents lower than a month ago (\$3.50) and 45 cents lower than this day last year (\$3.86).

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.5 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance and auto-related services.

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OPINION



Does some of my Social Security payment include repayment of my contributions?

Dear Rusty

I have a question about my Social Security benefits. Would I be correct to assume that part of the monthly Social Security income I get is a repayment of what I contributed to the fund while I was working? If so, how much of my monthly benefit payment is my own money coming back to me? Signed: Curious Beneficiary

Dear Curious

I'm afraid that is not how Social Security works. The money you contribute to Social Security during your working years does not go into a special account to be repaid to you. Rather, the Social Security taxes you pay while working are used to pay benefits to all those currently receiving Social Security benefits.

The system is, in effect, a "pay as you go" program where all those currently contributing help pay benefits for all those now receiving. What your contributions do, however, is earn you "quarter credits" and, when you have enough credits, you become eligible for Social Security retirement benefits for life. Generally, someone must have about 40 quarters, about 10 years, contributing to Social Security to be eligible for SS retirement benefits.

How much you receive monthly is determined not by how much you contributed but, rather, by how much your work earnings were over your lifetime. You will get a percentage of your average pre-retirement work income as your monthly Social Security payment, but that is also affected by your age when you claim benefits.

It is your average lifetime earnings adjusted for inflation, which determines your "Primary Insurance Amount." Your PIA is what you get at your Social Security Full Retirement Age, but your age when you claim benefits determines if you get more or less than your PIA.

Claiming SS before your FRA means a smaller monthly benefit, while waiting longer than your FRA means a benefit higher than your PIA. SS benefits reach maximum at age 70. FYI, each person's FRA is different based on the year they were born, but full retirement age today is between age 66 and 67. When you claim benefits relative to your FRA determines how much of your PIA you will receive each month.

So, your contributions to Social Security aren't used to determine your monthly benefit amount, but your average lifetime work earnings and age when you claim are. Nevertheless, you may be interested to know that most people get back everything they have personally contributed to Social Security within about three to five years of collecting their benefits. In that sense, Social Security is an exceptionally good deal, since most Americans now collect benefits for about two decades.

And therein lies much of Social Security's financial dilemma; people are now collecting benefits for many more years than the current program is designed to support. And that is what Congress needs to fix as soon as possible. The Social Security

SOCIAL SECURITY, page 5

Correction

The piece on the Bel Canto Opera, which appeared in the Aug. 15 edition of the Country Journal, identified Daniel Sutin as a tenor, he is a baritone. Steven Andrew Murray is the tenor.



I received an email from a Brimfield resident who said, "On Aug. 1 at the no named pond in Warren on New Reed Street there were three great egrets near the far shore. The birds would sometimes be out of sight in the vegetation near the shore." He also saw two great blue herons and a belted kingfisher.

The great egret is a large, 39 inches, white heron with a yellow bill and black legs. In breeding season, both males and females have long white plumes on their backs. Like other herons, the great egret feeds by slowly walking, head erect and then striking its prey. It forages in shallow water for small fish and amphibians. It also feeds on land for insects, reptiles and small mammals.

Great egrets nest in colonies with other herons, ibises and cormorants or they nest singly. The female lays one to six pale bluish eggs in a flimsy platform nest of sticks, twigs and reeds placed in a tree from eight to 40 feet above ground or in cattails. They inhabit marshes, swamps, seashores and lake margins.

In the past, they were hunted for the plumes used in the feather trade. Since the ban on hunting and on the use of DDT, which caused fragile eggshells, their population increased.

Eagle sighting and more

My daughter, Paula, saw a belted kingfisher at Tully Lake in Royalston on Aug. 3. She saw two cormorants, two female mal-

lards and a juvenile bald eagle at Hardwick Pond on Aug. 10. The bald eagle was diving, unsuccessfully, for fish not too far from her canoe. She said, "[It] was really cool to see."

Brimfield birds

The Brimfield resident, who saw the great egrets, said, "I have a bird bath with a drip. On a recent hot afternoon the bird bath got a workout; catbird, blue jay, titmouse, house finch, Baltimore oriole, rose-breasted grosbeak, song sparrow and chipping sparrow all took a bath and goldfinch were getting a drink from the drip."

He also said, "In the yard yesterday (Aug. 2) I saw two Carolina wrens. I've seen two Carolina

wrens in the yard infrequently since spring but I don't think they have nested nearby because I've never heard them singing. And at the very top of a dead tree (where else) I saw a male scarlet tanager."

He said the male ruby-throated hummingbirds are still around and there is more activity at the feeders now that the recently fledged young are out and about.

He also reported at the pond on South Street the four great blue herons nests are all empty, the twelve chicks have all fledged and the three osprey chicks are out of the nest and flying around the pond.

Bird bath

I wish I had the activity at my bird bath this Brimfield resident has. I have yet to see a bird use it. My daughter's dog drinks from it whenever he visits.

Hovering hummingbird

Recently, I let my daughter Jenny's dogs out. While I watched them from the window in the door a ruby-throated female hummingbird came name the door and hovered as if looking in the window at me. Ironically, I was wearing a tee shirt with hummingbirds and bee balm. Maybe it was attracted to the red bee balm.

Hummingbirds and more

The Brimfield resident said in response to my email telling him about my hummingbird experience, "I've had hummingbirds hover in front of me a couple of times, pretty cool. Also yesterday I saw some motion out of a window and when I looked it was a hummingbird and a female common yellowthroat having a 'discussion.' The hummingbird was upset I believe because the warbler was near where it perches between visits to a nearby feeder."

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 or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



Great egret

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 in the same section where the error originally occurred.

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BECKET

Bobby Sweet to present at outdoor concert



Bobby Sweet

BECKET – As part of its Music Brings Communities Together program, the Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will present an outdoor concert with local legend Bobby Sweet and his BSweet Band on Saturday, Aug. 24, from 5-7 p.m.

People should bring lawn chairs, coolers, snacks and children. In case of rain, the concert will move into the Arts Center's Seminary Hall. This event, part of the BAC's "Music Brings Communities Together" program, is free; donations are welcome. For more information, people may visit beckartscenter.org.

Becket Art Center seeks marketplace vendors

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, announces that applications are open for vendors at its Holiday Arts and Crafts Marketplace, which will take place on Saturday, Nov. 9, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Arts Center's historic Seminary Hall.

This will be a perfect opportunity for Berkshire artists and crafters to sell special gifts and unique decorations for the holidays. Space is limited, so vendors are encouraged to apply even before the deadline of Sunday, Oct. 1. Vendors may visit beckartscenter.org for more information and registration.

Becket Bash set for Aug. 25

BECKET – The Becket Art Center's annual community-wide party, The Becket Bash, will take place at Camp Watitoh on Route 8 on Sunday, Aug. 25 from 5-9 p.m.

This year, the Bash theme will be "Hoedown." It will feature country and western dancing with spirited caller, Jeff Walker and famil); down-home food provided by Berkshire Culinary Group, more music by the multi-talented Jack Waldheim, a fantastic raffle \$20 for five tickets and more. It will be held rain or shine. Tickets are \$65, available by visiting beckartscenter.org.

Yoked Parish host chicken barbecue

BECKET – Yoked Parish of Becket will host the annual chicken barbecue on Saturday, Aug. 31, from noon-2 p.m. at the First Congregational Church on YMCA Road.

Rain date is Sunday, Sept. 1. Funds will benefit fuel, electrical, plumbing and food pantry needs in the community.

Menu will include 1/2 chicken, corn on the cob, potato salad, green bean salad and homemade blueberry crisp with real whipped cream for \$18. People may eat-in, take out or eat on the beautiful grounds. For reservations, which are strongly suggested, people should call 413-623-8300 or 413-623-6455.

Juried show runs Aug. 22-Sept. 15

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will host a free opening reception for the third juried

SOCIAL SECURITY *from page 4*

trust funds, which now provide supplemental money to pay benefits, are projected to be depleted around 2033, which will mean a cut in everyone's monthly Social Security payment, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program and restore it to fiscal solvency.

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.

show of the season, "Centered," on Friday, Aug. 23 from 5-7 p.m.

Featured artists are Donna Bernstein, Tara Bronner, Shany Porras, Brent Ridge and Kim Saul. The show will close with another free reception on Sunday, Sept. 15 from 2-4 p.m.



Shany Porras is one of the featured artist for the juried show "Centered at the Becket Art Center." *Courtesy photo by Shany Porras*

BUCKLAND

Historical Society hold open houses Aug. 25

BUCKLAND – The Historical Society will hold open house at The Wilder Homestead: 129 Rt. 112 and the museum, 20 Upper St. on Sunday, Aug. 25 from 2-4 p.m.

People will tour the furnished 1795 Saltbox Home with five fireplaces, the 1780 English Barn, which is 90% restored and the circa 1820 Shoemaker Shop, where boots could be bartered for with bushels of apples, cords of wood or in one case, the work of digging a grave.

The Buckland Historical Society Museum, 20 Upper St., located in a former school, houses three floors of artifacts and town records. There are exhibits on local industry, clothing, education featuring Mary Lyon, local artists Robert Strong Woodward and Edward Romanzo Elmer, as well, as the tragic life of Josiah Spaulding.



This photo shows the interior restoration work of the 1780 English barn.

Submitted photographers

CHESTERFIELD

Town Clerk lists primary election information

CHESTERFIELD – The State Primary will be Tuesday, Sept. 3 from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

Voting takes place at the Senior Center/Community Center, 400 Main Road. The last day to register to vote for the State Primary is Saturday, Aug. 24. There will be voter registration and in person voting on Saturday, Aug. 24 at the town offices located at 422 Main Road from 9-11 a.m. and 3-5 p.m.

In person voting also will be held on Monday, Aug. 26 at the town offices from 5-7:30 p.m. All mail in ballots for

the primary election must be returned to the Town Clerk's office before the close of the polls at 8 p.m. in order to be counted.

If people wish to vote by mail their application must be received by Monday, Aug. 26 at 5 p.m. to allow enough time for the ballot to be mailed to them. Voters can apply via the State's online portal by visiting www.sec.state.ma.us/MailInRequestWeb/MailInBallot.aspx. People may call the town clerk at 413-296-4741 or email to townclerk@townofchesterfieldma.com.

PITTSFIELD

Biodiversity Day happens Sept. 13 and 14

PITTSFIELD - The 15th Annual Berkshire Biodiversity Day, also known as Berkshire BioBlitz, welcomes community members of all ages to join biologists, naturalists and environmentalists to identify as many plants, animals, fungi and other organisms as possible during a 24-hour period.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place starting on Friday, Sept. 13 at noon to Saturday, Sept. 14 at on the Berkshire Community College campus, 1350 West St. Participants may take part at any time during this period to record a survey of their findings and experience first-hand the importance of a healthy, active ecosystem in their community.

This year's program promises to be an engaging experience for all nature enthusiasts. The schedule is packed with guided walks, presentations and demonstrations led by experts. Presentation topics include native plants as insect habitat from Charley Eiseeman, moths and how to observe them from Carla Rhodes, lichen from Kay Hurley and arthropods from Bryan "Professor Bugman" Man.

Professor Tom Tynning will lead an amphibian, reptile, and small mammal walk that will involve checking under

cover boards—a common surveying method used by herpetologists. Rene Wendell from Hoffmann Bird Club will lead an owl prowl and Matthew Rymkiewicz will lead a demo on how to lightsheet for moths. Ben Nickley of Berkshire Bird Observatory will also conduct a bird banding demonstration. People may visit www.berkshire-bioblitz.org to find a detailed schedule of the 24-hour program.

All attendees should meet in the lobby of the Koussevitzky Arts Center on BCC's campus. Biological surveys and expert-led walks will be conducted on BCC's campus, which spans 180 plus acres and boasts a diverse range of habitats including meadows, forests and wetlands. Presentations will take place in the K-111 Auditorium.

The 15th Annual Berkshire Biodiversity Day is organized and sponsored by Berkshire Environmental Action Team and Nature Academy of the Berkshires. It's co-sponsored by Berkshire Community College, Greylock Federal Credit Union. People may visit www.berkshirebioblitz.org or email team@thebeatnews.org to learn more about this 24-hour biological survey and the scheduled activities.

HUNTINGTON

Recreation Committee holds summer camp, lists other events

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Recreation Committee has been busy this summer between summer camp, which was held at Stanton Hall for five weeks and updating Pettis Field playground.

Children had an assortment of activities, including weekly trips to the library and family field trips to Majestic Theater, Zoo at Forest Park, Fun- Z, blueberry picking at Jameson's Farm and Mt. Tom's Ice Cream.

Upcoming events include a free movie night at Stanton Hall on Saturday, Sept. 21 at 6 p.m. and a picking at Jameson's High Meadow farm in Chester on Saturday, Sept. 28 from 3-4 p.m. Trunk or Treat at the Huntington Public Library will be held Saturday, Oct. 26 from 5-6 p.m., followed by the Fire Association's Bonfire. People may email the recreation committee at recreation@huntingtonma.us to sign up for either event.



Children enjoy painting bricks as one of the fun activities at the Huntington Recreation Committee summer camp in Huntington.



This young girl enjoys playing with shaving cream or slime.



Children participating in the summer camp sponsored by the Huntington Recreation Committee enjoy a field trip.



Children spent time outdoors on this hike to a river.

Submitted Photos

Historical Society to host open house

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Historical Society will be hosting an open house at the Norwich Bridge School House Museum, 72 Worthington Road, on Sunday, Aug. 26 from 1-4 p.m. The museum is home to many arti-

facts relating to our town collected and donated to the Historical Society. This event is free. The Historical Society meets at the school house on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. New members are welcome to attend.



Members of the Huntington Fire Department assembled on the town green with pit bull Guru and his owner, Frank Giuffre, before receiving a Governor's Citation for saving the dog's life.

Turley Photos by Wendy Long

Guru's lifesavers receive Governor's Citation

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

everyone pulled together and the dog survived.

HUNTINGTON – Bi-weekly concerts sponsored by the Huntington Community Events Committee resumed on Thursday, Aug. 15 with a performance by the band "Off the Record."

It marked two weeks since the town's first responders were on the town green during a concert to attend to a medical emergency. For a 4-½ year old pit bull named Guru, who was unresponsive. As reported in last week's issue of the Country Journal, owner Frank Giuffre frantically approached Police Chief Robert Garriepy, who was patrolling the concert on the town green. Garnering a series of implausible resources-including the fire department's first responders assembled nearby, Veterinarian Hazel Holman and local restaurant Comfort Kitchen-

The Aug. 15 concert was preceded by a presentation from Huntington Select Board member and Fire Department Captain and the first department member to arrive on the scene of two Citations from Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kimberly Driscoll. The first citation was presented to the Huntington Fire Department and the second was announced for Police Chief Garriepy.

Dated Aug. 8, the citations read, "On behalf of the residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am pleased to confer upon you this Governor's Citation in recognition of your fast action to intervene with CPR to save a dog's life. We commend you for your sharp instincts and bravery in a time of dire need. The Commonwealth thanks you for all that you do."



The band "Off the Record" consists of Ken Hebert on keyboards, Tom Gauron on bass guitar, drummer Jim Aiello, singer Patty Meon and Guitar player David Motron.

Chalk Dust to perform at final concert of series

HUNTINGTON – On Thursday, Aug. 22 will be the final week of the Huntington Summer Music Series on the town green located at the intersection of Routes 20 and 112.

The group Chalk Dust will make their debut in Huntington, closing out the series from 6:30-8 p.m. Chalk Dust is a western mass party band made up of all teachers, playing rock, country and more. Bake sale will be by The Hilltown Community Ambulance, pro-

viding EMS coverage to Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Montgomery, Russell and Worthington.

Additional parking is available at the municipal lot on Prospect Ave. Performances will be moved inside Stanton Hall in case of inclement weather. The hall is handicapped accessible. No pets are allowed. Concerts are free and sponsored by The Huntington Community Events Committee.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Gateway school district opens Aug. 29

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Teachers in the Gateway Regional School District return on Monday, Aug. 26 for three days of classroom preparation, district-wide professional development and school specific training and development.

Para professionals return Tuesday, Aug. 27. Superintendent Kristen Smidy said, “We are excited that we built in one additional day for professional development at the beginning of this school year, so our half days for PD went from six to four. The first half-day will be Friday, Aug. 30. This way, we can front load lots of the learning for staff to hit the deck running with students.”

Students return on Thursday, Aug. 29 with the regional middle and high schools starting at 7:20 a.m., and elementary schools open for business at 8:55 a.m. Students have a half day on Friday, Aug. 30. for staff professional development and a three-day weekend to observe Labor Day on Monday, Sept. 2.

Preschool students will return on Tuesday, Sept. 3. New this year, four-year olds will attend from 8:35 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Three year olds will attend from 8:35-11:35 a.m. Monday through Thursday.

Breakfast and lunch will continue to be offered free of charge to students.

Middle/high school dismissal will be 2:20 p.m. and elementary schools will end at 3:35 p.m. This year’s schedule reflects an additional 20 minutes of instruction for grades 6 – 12, and adds a half hour to elementary school schedules.

Transportation Manager Debbie Burkott has posted bus routes on the district website (www.grsd.org). Feel free to call her at 413-685-1016 or email dburkott@grsd.org with questions or for additional information.

Middle/High School Principal Will Sullivan has announced that the wood shop is now available to students in grades 7-12. He also reported that they are partnering with the Western Mass. Food Bank and Huntington Food Pantry this year to build a food pantry at the school. This will be available to students, staff and families whenever needed and they hope to have it up and running soon.

Open House this year will be on Monday, Oct. 7 and will follow the same format as last year’s with plans to grow community involvement at the event. Anyone from the towns of Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery and Russell who would like to have a table at the Open House should email wsullivan@grsd.org or call 413-685-1100. “We are looking forward to a great year,” Sullivan said.

Chester Elementary School and Littleville Elementary School have

announced that their Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math teacher will no longer be a shared staff position; each school will have a full time STEAM or STREAM teacher this year. Chester’s teacher “will provide STEAM instruction to students in grades PreK - 5, three to five times a week, compared to two to three times per week last year,” Chester Principal Vanna Maffuccio said. “Our STEAM teacher will also now be able to facilitate five student clubs, which will each meet once a week for 25 - 35 minutes.” Maffuccio added that she will also provide morning enrichment from 8:40-9:10 a.m. twice a week, an effort that is Chester-specific and aligns with their enrichment priority as outlined in the school improvement plan.

Chester Elementary School’s STEAM efforts were recognized in the August 2024 edition of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math STEM Newsletter. DESE dubbed Chester Elementary School as a “small rural school doing big things.” The article recognized the school for their hydroponic garden, tapping trees and boiling syrup on school grounds, launching a “Girls Who Code Club” and engaging in micro-green planting with a local farmer. Chester Elementary serves students from the towns of Blandford, Chester and Middlefield.

Littleville Principal Melissa McCaul

reports that her school will approach their full time instructor differently. They will use their library as their STREAM Hub, a model that includes science, technology, “Reading and wRiting,” arts, and mathematics. Littleville will merge library time with STEM to integrate literacy skills and increase library access from every other week to weekly, and provide more outdoor learning experiences. The program has also been expanded to include PreK students. These goals came out of a family survey that took place last spring.

McCaul also announced that Littleville will kick the school year off with a One School One Book initiative to foster community. All students will be reading the same book and related activities will be planned throughout September. Students from the towns of Huntington, Montgomery and Russell attend Littleville Elementary School.

Smidy added, “We are excited to offer these new opportunities this year for students to experience learning beyond the classroom walls that connect to their communities and lives. Our Barr grant will help us support this work, and we will focus our professional development and apply for additional grant funding to create as many opportunities as possible.”

Smidy encouraged families to continue to provide input for how they would like learning to look as Gateway moves throughout the year.

Family Resource Center offers back to school supplies

By Kathryn Koegel
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – A line formed outside It Takes a Village’s The Village Closet, which operates out of a historic church building in Huntington, for their annual Back to School giveaway on Sunday, Aug. 18.

It was pouring rain, but an eager crowd of parents and kids waited their turn to “shop” for essential goods for families preparing for the school year.

“This year over 400 people attended our special back to school event, which helped them ensure their children had the shoes, clothes and supplies they needed to start the year,” says executive director Lisa Goding. “Two hundred new backpacks were given out. We were coming up short on supplies this year, but individual donors and sponsors like Azure Green & The Blossom Center, Greenfield Savings Bank, Oliver’s Farm Stand, The Russell Inn, the Salvation Army and Williamsburg Hair stepped up. In all we raised over \$4,500 for the initiative thanks to our wonderful community and its businesses.”

On top of the new backpacks given away, supply packs were available. The supply packs were put together and dif-

ferentiated by either elementary school or middle and high school and included pencils, crayons, glue sticks, scissors, folders, notebooks, pencil pouches, index cards, and more depending on age. In addition to the clothing and supplies, Williamsburg Hair offered free children’s haircuts.

The Village Closet, which looks just like an organized store to patrons, offers an affordable and sustainable way for families to get the goods their children need to attend school with dignity and preparedness, says Goding. “Families shop our racks set up by children’s sizes and clothing types and ‘check out’ by simply giving us their addresses so that we can keep track for funding purposes.”

The Village Closet is located at 2 East Main St. and is open Sundays and Mondays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. There is no proof of income required. For more information on the services of It Takes a Village, which include free post-partum visits and early-childhood group activities, people may visit hilltown-village.org.

Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Smith to give lecture via livestream

GREAT BARRINGTON – Pulitzer Prize winner and former U.S. Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith’s poetry collection “Wade in the Water” has been announced as the 2024 Book One selection.

A lecture and question and answer will be held on Thursday, Aug. 29 at 7 p.m. at the McConnell Theater at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, 84 Alford Road. The event is open to the public and free of charge and will be available via livestream.

Published in 2018, “Wade in the Water” will be read by incoming students when they arrive at Simon’s Rock.

Beginning in 2005, incoming students have participated in Book One as a common starting point for their college careers. Each year, a book is selected based on excellence and suitability for promoting interdisciplinary conversations about the intersection of cultures. The book, lecture and supporting materials are supplied in the hopes that it inspires discussion and exploration in

students during the preliminary weeks of their First-Year Seminar.

Smith, appointed the 22nd U.S. Poet Laureate from 2017 to 2019, has written five books of poetry. She is a Professor of English and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University and a Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Professor at Harvard Radcliffe Institute.

People can join the free livestream for this event by visiting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82975129264>.

Bard College at Simon’s Rock is the only college in the country specifically designed for highly motivated students ready to enter college after the 10th or 11th grade. Simon’s Rock offers a challenging program in the liberal arts and sciences, taught exclusively in small seminars by supportive, highly trained faculty, who are leading scholars in their fields.

People may visit simons-rock.edu, bardacademy.simons-rock.edu, and bqlp.simons-rock.edu for more information



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RUSSELL

Russell Public Library plants fruit trees

The last day of Summer Reading at the Russell Public Library was spent in the community park behind the library.

They planted two peach and three pear trees with Felix, Maggie and Boaz from the non-profit, "Help Yourself," based at Turtle Bend Farm, just over the line in Montgomery. The fruits from the trees are for the community to enjoy in the coming years.

The library appreciated the help they got from their good friends, Russell Highway manager, John Hoppe and the water buckets from Peter Consolini, water manager.

The tree planting was part of our Read, Renew, Repeat summer reading theme. The goal was to renew the park and revive interest in its community use. This summer they also renewed the pollinator garden in front of the library. Participants learned about bees and started a mural to beautify the park.

The culminating summer activity was the showing of the movie "Encanto" in the park behind the library, under the stars on Saturday, August 17 from 7-9:30 p.m.



A volunteer digs a hole to plant one of five fruit trees in community park.

Submitted photos



Volunteers and children help plant fruit trees in the community park behind the Russell Public Library.

Russell Family Fun Day happens Aug. 25

RUSSELL – Saturday, Aug. 25 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. in Strathmore Park just east of Russell off of Rte 20, the Russell Police are holding their annual Family Fun Day.

"It's an event we use to encourage the community to come together with police," says Lieutenant Sean Shattuck. "It's free except we are selling tickets for affordably-priced food and drinks."

Russell Family Fun Day features a car show. "Everything from classic cars, to hot rods," says Shattuck. Fittingly, there will also be vintage police cars and fire trucks. For the kids there will be a bouncy house and an obstacle course plus what is called a 'reverse dunk tank' where town officials and just possibly Chief Kevin Hennessey may get a bit wet for the

right amount of donations," says Shattuck. Music is from DJ Gary from the Westfield Cruisers Club and band Kittie & the Beard.

Why create such an event? "This is a chance to bring everyone together, relax, listen to some music and build roads into the community. There was a hole between the police and the community," says Shattuck. "We adhere to the community policing philosophy and this event is part of that." Last year over 600 people attended. It is not necessary to be a resident of Russell. "We have amazing support from local and national businesses. Walmart, Stop 'n Shop and Big Y will be there. Come for the day or just an hour or two. It's going to be fun."

SELECT BOARD

from page 1

Highway Superintendent Brad Curry and the department's Administrative Assistant Ashley Fickett met with the board at 5:15 p.m. to discuss job expectations. The board is allowing Fickett to continue her part-time job with the highway department, despite taking an outside job that has a daytime work schedule. This will require her to complete many of her highway department duties from home. Peloquin had prepared a summary of expectations for approval. Curry reported that things have been going much better since Fickett was hired. He said she has picked up on the technology requirements, and has filed data online; when they double-checked with the state, everything was found to be correct. Peloquin said a big part of the position is the state reimbursements, which must be filed on time. The frequency of tasks such as getting the mail, responding to emails and phone messages was outlined. This is being offered on a temporary basis to see if the solution is workable. "I'm just very excited to get to do both," Fickett said.

Curry also took the board's 5:30 p.m. appointment slot to report on highway department updates. Curry and Fickett will be looking at grant funding. Recently, the department replaced two culverts on Allen Coit Road, Culverts on County Road are starting to come apart and need to be replaced; they want to do this before school resumes.

Upcoming projects include a culvert on Goss Hill, continuing to prepare Allen Coit Road for upcoming work and repairing potholes on Goss Hill Road, Littleville Road, Basket Street and Bromley Road. Grading will begin in early September, starting with Nagler, Goss Hill, Church, Barr and Harlow Clark. Paving bids were opened for the highway yard, which extends into the transfer station. Two were rejected for not having Mass DOT pre qualifications. Williams Paving was the lowest bidder at \$51,256 and Curry has checked their references. This was moved and unanimously approved. They will work with the health department and contractor to determine whether or not they have to

close the transfer station.

Curry has had discussions with area residents about line painting at the corner of Searle and County Roads. Residents would like to see two stop signs there, which was supported by the board. Fickett and Peloquin also shared a form they developed for road closures that will ensure that relevant departments ambulance, fire, police and impacted residents are notified ahead of time.

Curry asked about surplus equipment; if they get rid of any surplus equipment the funds go back into the general fund, but the accountant thinks there may be a way to manage this to keep funds with the department. Peloquin said they also need a written policy for this. This will be looked at during a later meeting. Curry also thanked Hathaway for his help with the brush on recent road work.

At 6 p.m., the Select Board broke for executive session to discuss the deployment of or strategy regarding security personnel. They returned to open session at 6:40 p.m.

Police Chief Robert Garriepy was on the agenda for 6:30 p.m. to discuss speeding on Route 112 near a densely populated section. After reviewing the area, he suggests that the 25 mph zone be extended about 200 feet, which has to be approved by Mass DOT. Booth suggested that the police department bring the concerned residents up to date on this effort.

Fire Chief Joshua Ellinger arrived to continue a previous discussion concerning firefighter retirement age. Ellinger had reported a volunteer firefighter recently turned 65, which is the mandated retirement age for paid firefighters in Massachusetts. Whether or not a volunteer firefighter can stay on after turning 65 was not clear in the state law. The insurance company, CHUB, was consulted and said there is no increase in the premium, medical expenses on the job would be covered up to the policy limit, but they would not pay a weekly indemnity. If they are over age 70, there is no medical coverage. Booth said he can't justify it and asked if this person

was irreplaceable. "I look at people that are younger than 65 that have died in fires, three in the hilltowns in the last 15 years. I don't want to put any person at that risk," Booth said, adding that the law was put there for a reason. Hathaway agreed. It was a harder decision for McVeigh, who has worked with the fire department for some years.

Ellinger said they'd keep him around the firehouse as a retiree, but would write a mandatory retirement policy for Huntington. Booth moved that the town not go for an over 65 ruling for volunteer firefighters due to liability to the town and risk of harm to the individual. Hathaway concurred and McVeigh recused himself from the vote.

In other business, Tri-State Truck and Trailer won the bid for a fire department trailer for \$15,200 to be paid out of ARPA funds. The Sept. 3 State Primary election warrant was approved as were several Stanton Hall use requests. An inter-municipal agreement for shared public health nursing was approved and will be at no cost to the town. Three invoices (totaling \$1,208.02) from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission were approved, related to the Crescent Street project and town hall ramp.

The Select Board also approved the application for a regional proposal for a shared energy manager. If awarded, this would give Huntington 276 hours over two years to assess all town buildings, look at energy saving strategies and apply for grants. Eric Weiss will look for sources to maintain this funding beyond the two years, but the town is not on the hook for payment if he is unsuccessful.

The Select Board agreed to continue to allow the FRTA van to be parked in the highway department yard for as long as needed. Curry has a key if the van has to be moved. Its parking spot is out of the way for snow removal.

Several items were discussed and either continued to a future meeting, referred to other town departments, or declined. Discussion continued on the specs for a security card system, which is expected to be voted on in September. A business owner asked about bylaws

regarding unkempt storefronts downtown, which was referred to the zoning board. Due to the lengthy agenda, discussion on a municipal hearing officer was moved to a future agenda.

Discussion continued on the quarterly payments for the Hilltown Community Ambulance Association into the Nonpublic Ambulance Service Trust Fund. There has been a lot of confusion at the state level about this, with bills coming out in prior years and instructions to disregard them. This left \$6,119.84 in unspent funds from earlier fiscal years, which the town accountant said could be moved into this year for the same purpose to pay the first two quarters of FY'25. McVeigh will follow up with people at the state to get them to invoice earlier so they are aligned with budget season, and to also see if there's a way to not have the town pay into this fund as HCAA isn't getting any real benefit from it.

Peloquin concluded the meeting with her updates. North Hall had a rental request as a rain site for an outdoor wedding. As the water issue is still unresolved, Booth requested a determination from the Health Department for use by the public. In the meantime, the request is denied as the selectboard would not hear this information until Aug. 28, deemed too late for the wedding. North Hall is already on the agenda for the next selectboard meeting, concerning needed repairs.

Down to Earth Excavating will replace the sewage line at town hall in the next couple of weeks, but recommended a second tree be removed. The tree warden said the first tree could be covered in the tree account. The old line going into the basement jail cells still needs to be removed and the contractor is working on the scope and timeline for the bathroom repair.

Peloquin shared a state notice of Community Compaq grant programs opening on Aug. 19 with rolling submission dates for different grants.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09; the next meeting of the Huntington Select Board will be Aug. 28 at 5 p.m.

WATER

“back-flush’ the filters which unfortunately means more time for sediment to work through the 330,000 gallon clearwell and 7.5 miles of distribution piping.”

As covered in the Country Journal, the water was initially found to have elevated levels of iron and manganese, which lead to the shutdown. Daley had said the water issues related to climate change, a drought followed by storms that dumped inches of water that

increased turbidity or the amount of sediment in the water as well as an antiquated, over 100 year old reservoir system, a clogged screen at the larger of the two reservoirs and a detached outtake pipe from that reservoir.

Some progress at that reservoir has been made, but residents would not likely see the result yet. “The supply from Horn Pond is fully functioning, however, at reduced gallons-per-minute flow,” said Daley. “We anticipate diving this week

to determine what is causing the issue. We’re seeing a return to increased discoloration, which is caused by sediment...ie sand particulate.”

“Chester is still under the DEP-imposed Boil Water Order and continues distributing bottled water to residents Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at the Route 20 Fire House,” continues Daley. “We are waiting on final criteria from Mass DEP to determine all the data required to allow the Boil Water

Order to be rescinded.” Chester currently has 250 customers on its water system including its three restaurants: Carm’s, The Common Table and The Blue Note, which receive gallon jugs of water to do everything from cooking to serving customers drinking water and cleaning dishes.

Local resident Frank Pero has stepped up to become the town’s third water commissioner.

GRAVEL

from page 1

the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and invited Levesque to speak on behalf of the project. Hull Forestlands owns a parcel of approximately 222 acres and has filed a special permit application to remove sand and gravel from just under five acres on the parcel. Levesque informed the public that they had learned that the ZBA had not yet selected consultants for the nine areas of study they are considering, which is why none of the project representatives had attended the second continuance hearing, held earlier this summer. Among the proposed studies are the project’s impact on noise, traffic, aquifer disruption, silica dust and its impact on public health, diesel truck emissions, water table studies and property values.

In a letter to the ZBA dated June 18, Levesque agreed to the traffic study and noise study. The access road to the parcel comes onto Route 112 just north of the green bridge above Knightville Road. Mass DOT, Levesque said, would not typically conduct the study, but would use a traffic consultant. Levesque will share a list of traffic consultants with the ZBA. Further, the letter specified that the town’s aquifer is about 2.5 miles away and all of the water resource protection bylaws in the state only require a study if a project is located within 400 feet. Also in the letter, the state’s Natural Heritage Species program has mapped polygons for protected endangered species; their map contains no polygons on the proposed site.

A consultant for a noise study, Levesque said, would be more difficult to find. He was aware of one that was used for a project in Central Massachusetts and will get that name to the ZBA.

In terms of archeological impact, the Mass Environmental Policy Act would require a study if the parcel was of regional significance, which Levesque says it is not. Later in the hearing, Hull referred to the access road to the pit being a former town dirt road, as evidenced by several stone foundations and wells on the property.

A hydrologic study, which analyzes how water moves through the environment and interacts with living and non-living things, could also be done. Levesque believes the project will actually reduce runoff, not add to it, but this can be confirmed by a study.

In terms of a silica dust study, Levesque said he does not have that expertise, but suggested it be a condition of the project’s approval.

Minella-Sena, who is also a realtor, spoke to her online review concerning impact on property values of abutters. She reported that some showed a 20-30% decrease for properties in close proximity and a 7% decrease in properties within three miles. Minella-Sena, a realtor, said she also saw studies saying there was no impact. She felt this area is subjective, but that there is the potential for reduced property values.

Levesque reviewed the parcel map that shows 200-250 feet of rising, forested land between the river and the gravel pit. He confirmed that the project proposes 32 truckloads a week, not per day, as indicated on a report submitted with the original application that he said was likely a typo. Working from a groundwater study from the 2015 proposal,

Levesque said neither the geology of the area nor the river have changed in that time. They located the high water mean line with the conservation commission and found that it has not moved or changed since 2015. While Hull has forested some of the parcel, there has been no earth work other than the test pits.

Hathaway then invited questions from the ZBA. Helems asked how many gravel pits Hull has been involved with and whether they had monitored silica in any of them. Hull said this would be their fourth pit and they’ve never had to do a silica or dust study. The nearest pit in Russell has been operating for seven years and has 1-2 years remaining. The town renews their permit annually and Hull has not received any complaints about the operation.

Hull then reviewed a handout that they’d given out at this meeting. In it, he reports that income from gravel pits helps sustain and maintain forestlands. Hull selected Hilltown Sand & Gravel as their partner because they are local and it is all state highway from the pit to their processing and retail area. Its proximity lessens diesel impact from the project. Hull said that sand, gravel and rock is a critical resource to the community and that per capita use is 10 metric tons per year, per U.S. citizen.

“There is a ‘not in my backyard’ attitude,” Hull said. “No one really objects to a gravel pit as long as it is somewhere else.” Hull’s report also listed ten common uses for sand and gravel, including traction on icy roads, road and building construction, landscaping and agricultural purposes.

When asked how much of the material is used by the town of Huntington and its residents, Nolt estimated that 50% of their sales are in Huntington and that, by far, the vast majority stays in the hilltowns. “Huntington’s geology lends itself to having gravel,” Nolt explained, adding that the surrounding hilltowns do not have that same geology.

A number of area residents had questions and concerns, mostly about the noise impact and threat of silica dust on public health. Hull affirmed that the application does not propose blasting or crushing materials at the pit. Material would be moved to HS&G for processing. Hull suggested that this also be a condition of the ZBA permit.

Tax impact was questioned and former Town Clerk Linda Hamlin clarified that Hull already pays agricultural rate taxes on the parcel, which are at a lower rate, but would not be taxed on the materials that are removed. She corrected the misperception that HS&G, owned and operated by members who attend the Mennonite Church in Russell, is a religious organization and does not pay taxes. HS&G is a profit-making business that pays property, income and sales taxes and has a highway use tax, Hamlin said.

Concern over the reaction time of drivers heading south on Route 112 was shared by Nagler Cross resident Gary Cole, who said his review shows drivers would have four seconds to react to a slow moving truck coming onto the highway from the pit. The speed limit there is 50 miles per hour and the access road emerges below a curve on the highway. A resident on Route 112 asked about increased trucking through resi-



William Hull, applicant for a gravel pit permit in Huntington, spoke with those assembled at the third continuance hearing held Aug. 13.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

dential areas; Nolt responded that there would be an increase in trucks from the access road to HS&G, but there should not be an increase in any other areas of the town.

Ed Grabowski pointed out that Pill had represented the homeowners in an application for a gravel pit some years ago. At that time, Pill’s report (page 12) said that the location of the gravel pit in the midst of wetlands and concluded the application should be denied.

Pill answered that Hull’s proposal is different, adding “If this was going to be in a wetland, I would not be representing them (Hull).”

Mike Brisboise raised several concerns including what the land would look like once depleted and that there is still gravel on other parcels on Hull’s 222 acres. “Our fear is this continues from one phase to the next to the next,” Brisboise said, noting that gravel pits are limited to five acre parcels at a time.

Andrew Tacke said he felt they were glossing over the silica concerns and said that Occupational Safety Health Administration only began recognizing silica in the last six or seven years. He said testing was simple and involves an air testing process. He also questioned Levesque’s opinion on whether or not specific studies apply and said the town needs to consult someone independent of the project to help them determine which studies are needed.

Tacke also brought the meeting back to the issue of whether or not Hull plans to pursue additional pits on his land. “Is there a commitment that you will stop at 4.9 acres?” Tacke said. “Or once it’s done, will you be coming back for a new permit for another pit on the property?”

Hull responded that if he were interested in having multiple pits, he would have applied for all of them now. He verbally committed to this being the only gravel site on this property. Levesque added that there is an anti-segmentation regulation that would prevent him coming back with other applications.

One of the most moving testimonies of the hearing came from Goss Hill resident John Garriepy, who pointed out that the land is not zoned for a gravel pit so it shouldn’t even be considered. “My feeling is if the town doesn’t grant this permit, we have no problems. If the town grants this permit, we have a lot of problems.” Garriepy announced he is battling

stage 4 cancer resulting from materials he was exposed to as a firefighter. He emphasized that he does not have a lot of trust in the government about what is safe and what isn’t. Garriepy received applause from those attending.

Not everyone who spoke was opposed to the permit. Charles MacDonald of Sampson Road spoke about his own special permit for sand and gravel 20 years ago. Despite public concerns, he said the Zoning Board monitored it regularly. “These are issues, but they are not a legal issue,” MacDonald said. “I give my complete support to Bill.”

Ellen Davis countered, saying she’d been on the planning board when MacDonald’s pit was operating, describing it as farther away from homes. “There’s a difference here,” she said.

Gary Cole asked what the pit would look like when it is depleted. MacDonald explained that the topsoil is removed and saved to another area. The landowner must put up a bond that the area will be reclaimed. “Don’t worry about that,” he said. “Bill is a responsible land owner.”

Levesque added that the bond is put into place in case something happens to the landowner. Conditions include replacing the top soil, regrading and planting to restore the area to its natural condition.

Other questions included how water will be sourced to keep the dust down and what will happen to that effort on weekends. Hathaway responded that a consultant can be secured to recommend a plan.

Levesque said he will get a list of traffic and noise consultants to the Zoning Board, Hull said he needs a month to get the 2015 geologist’s study updated.

Agreed upon was a public meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 10 with Levesque, Hull and ZBA only for the purpose of selecting consultants and approving their expenditure (Hull). The continuance hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 12, when they hope to have some of the studies and reports back for review.

Representing HS&G was Dennis Nolt, who said after the hearing that it remains to be seen whether or not this project will result in additional jobs at their business. HS&G currently employs eight full time people. Without the new pit, they will run out of material in the next five years or so, Nolt said.

Middlefield COA lists lunch menu

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Council on Aging will serve lunch in the Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, on Wednesday, Aug. 21 at noon.

The menu is eat in or take out. The choice is veggie casserole – Chana Masala or corned beef, slice of ry bread,

carrots, cabbage and fresh fruit. People should call 413-623-9990 to reserve a meal by Monday, Aug. 19. Suggested donation is \$4

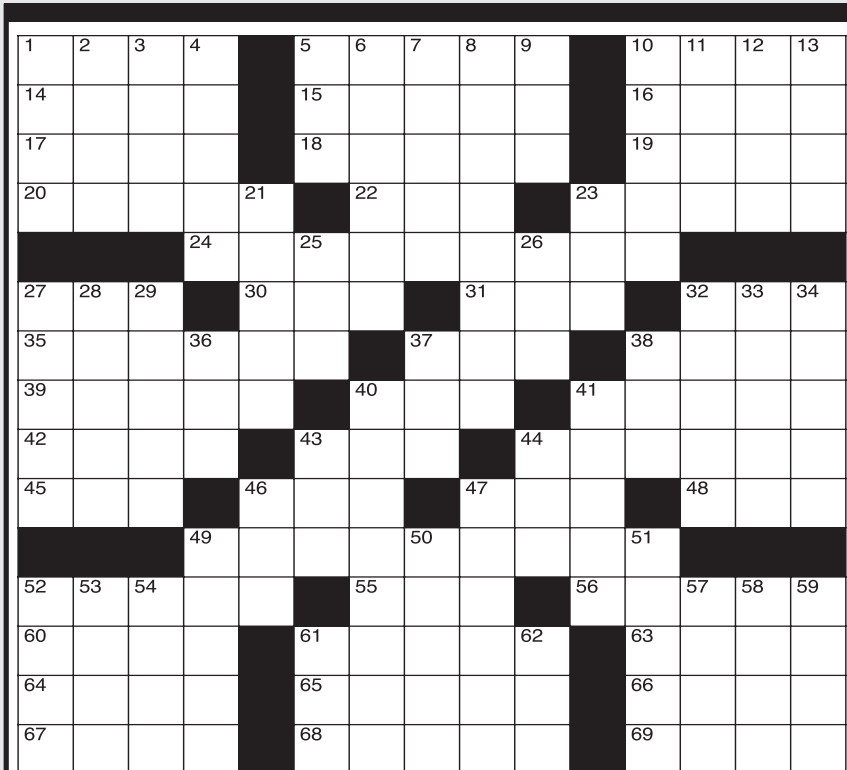
After lunch the Council on Aging will host a presentation by Mark Doane on home safety.

Otis COA lists events

OTIS – The Council on Aging will sponsor grief counseling on Wednesday, Sept. 4 at 1:30 p.m. in the Otis Town Hall.

Everyone is welcome to attend the grief counseling.

A watercolor class with Sue Racine will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 1 p.m. in the Otis Town Hall. Cost of the class is \$10. People should call the Otis COA at 413-269-0100, extension 5 to register as there are limited spots.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Mongolian city _ Bator
- 5. Coconut palms
- 10. Rounded knob
- 14. Japanese city
- 15. Type of sandwiches
- 16. A type of shape
- 17. Son of Shem
- 18. French modernist painter
- 19. Grandmother
- 20. Mammary gland of female cattle
- 22. Hill or rocky peak
- 23. Secret political clique
- 24. Songs to one's beloved
- 27. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- 30. Father
- 31. Chinese philosophical principle
- 32. Restrict the number or amount of
- 35. Combined into a single entity
- 37. Brother or sister
- 38. Evil spirit

- 39. Materials in the earth's crust
- 40. Partner to cheese
- 41. Of the sun
- 42. Baseball great Ty
- 43. After B
- 44. Place to relax on the beach
- 45. Folk singer DiFranco
- 46. Partly digested food
- 47. Small dog breed
- 48. Japanese honorific
- 49. Salts
- 52. Beard moss genus
- 55. Mountain pass
- 56. Type of sword
- 60. Albanian language
- 61. Metric weight unit
- 63. Italian Seaport
- 64. Longtime late night host
- 65. Extremely angry
- 66. Wading bird
- 67. Days in mid-month
- 68. Omitted from printed matter
- 69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Two-toed sloth
- 2. Cooking ingredient
- 3. Iranian city
- 4. Accuses
- 5. Corrie
- 6. Delivered a speech
- 7. Collection of sacred books
- 8. Theatrical
- 9. Very fast airplane
- 10. Arm bones
- 11. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 12. _ fide: legit
- 13. Gemstone
- 21. Counsels
- 23. Corporate bigwig
- 25. Cool!
- 26. Touch lightly
- 27. Small Milky Way constellation
- 28. Satirical website
- 29. Border lines
- 32. Soft drinks
- 33. Capital of Guam
- 34. Six-membered ring (chemistry)
- 36. Bar bill
- 37. Car mechanics group
- 38. Notable Bill Murray character
- 40. Health care for the aged
- 41. Gurus
- 43. A passage with access only at one end
- 44. Reduce
- 46. Spy organization
- 47. The upper surface of the mouth
- 49. Plants of the lily family
- 50. Type of reef
- 51. Oral polio vaccine developer
- 52. Mottled citrus fruit
- 53. Lose
- 54. Former Brazilian NBAer
- 57. Baseball great Ruth
- 58. _ Clapton, musician
- 59. Chance
- 61. Spanish soldier
- 62. CNN's founder

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

You are the master of leaping before looking, Aries, and this week is no different. You are not satisfied with hanging back and assessing the situation before acting. You're right in the mix.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Use the past as motivation to make some serious changes in your life, Cancer. This is the week to begin plotting a few ideas that can have a large impact.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, if no one is asking for advice right now, it's best to leave your life coach tendencies on the side. If and when someone needs your help, you can believe they'll come calling.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, if someone in your social circle is in need of a new perspective, you may have to speak up and help get them on a better path. Take this responsibility seriously.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Do not pretend to be a neutral party when two people come up to you seeking advice. You are too loyal to avoid taking sides, but it could affect the relationship with the other person.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, there may be some room in the budget for a few splurges this week. As long as you do not go too overboard, you can snag that item that you have had your eyes on for some time.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

You have big news and you're ready to tell the world. Hold it in a little longer so that your audience will be chomping at the bit to hear what you have to say.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

You have come a long way in a short time, Aquarius. Keep up the hard work and you will continue to see results you can be proud of.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, it may be time to step in and help a loved one refocus their energies. Rather than let them dwell on a difficult situation, work to offer them a new perspective.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22 Don't be so sure that you've examined every detail and checked them multiple times, Virgo. Your plan has to be fool-proof for it to work. Run it by another set of eyes.

SAGITTARIUS

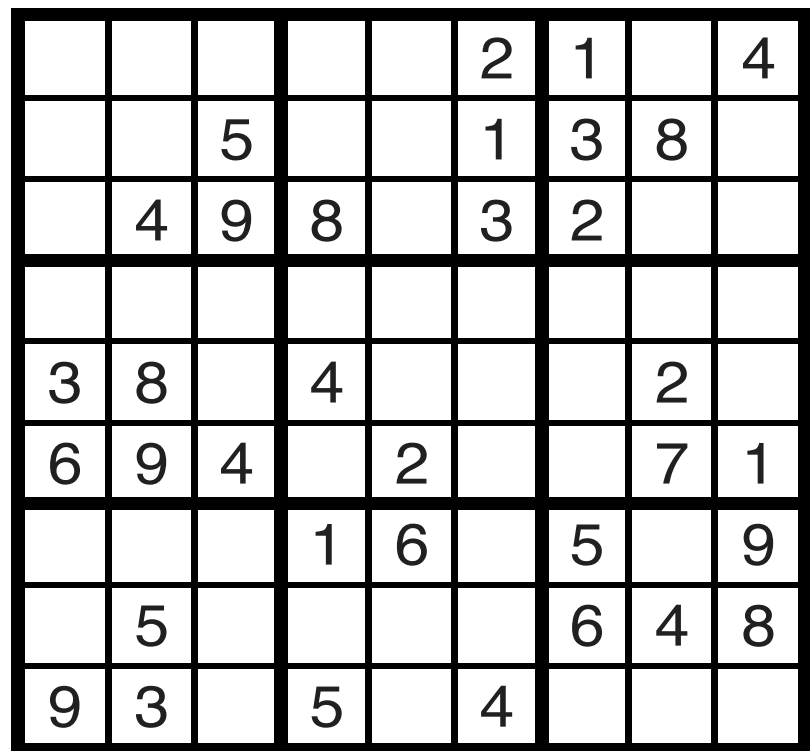
Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, it can be challenging for you to avoid the soap opera that is seemingly unfolding around you right now. Do your best to stay out of the fray for the time being.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, you will have to try to tune out the static all around you this week and concentrate on the things you need to accomplish. There is no wiggle room for distractions right now.



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answers

K	O	E	N	D	L	E	D	S	E	I	
S	I	R	I	T	E	V	R	I	O	N	E
I	R	V	B	T	A	V	I	C	G	E	H
R	E	R	S	A	L	O	C	V	N	S	U
S	E	S	T	A	V	C	L	I	S		
N	V	S	G	P	U	G	D	C	U	I	N
V	N	V	B	V	C	E	E	B	O	C	
A	V	T	O	S	C	W	S	V	W	I	S
L	O	B	B	I	S	D	E	T	I	N	U
P	A	P	C	A	V	T	D	V	D	T	O
S											
L	V	B	V	C	V	N	E	R	S	E	R
V	N	V	N	T	E	N	V	W	V	V	V
P	O	O	L	S	P	V	W	V	V	V	N
M	B	O	U	S	O	C	O	C	N	V	L

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HELP WANTED

The Trustees of the Otis Library seek applicants for a **Library Director Position.** The position pays \$21-\$25 per hour commensurate with experience. The Director can expect to work between 25-30 hours per week. An application packet is available by emailing otislibrary@cwmares.org or at the **Otis Library at 48 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253. (413) 269-0109.** The application deadline is September 13, 2024. The Otis Library Board of Trustees is an equal opportunity employer.

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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
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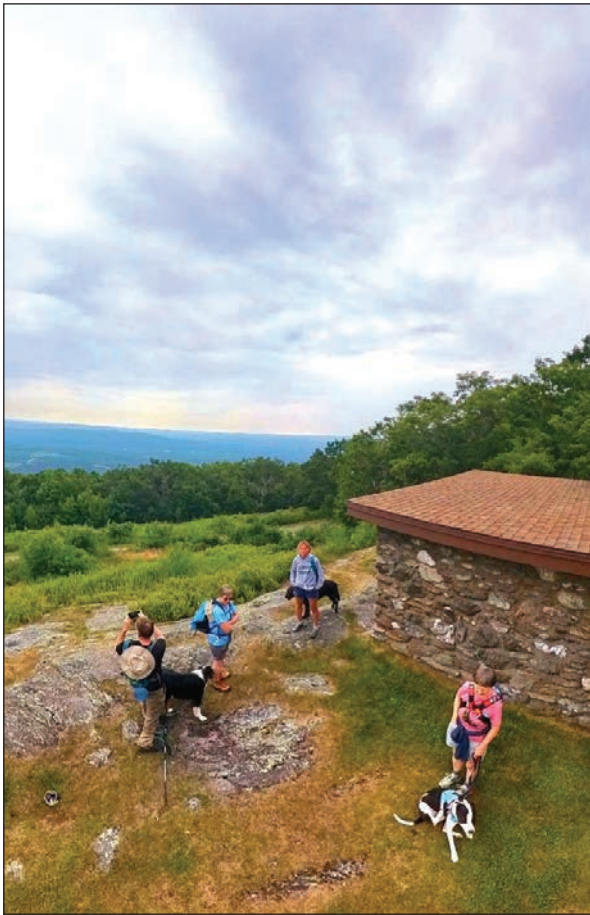
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Mount Everett summit has spectacular views



The Mount Everett shelter has views of the entire Housatonic Valley.

The Mount Everett Summit in Mount Washington. The first lookout on this site was a 38 foot tower with 10' x 10' cab erected in 1915. T

The states of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York contributed to its funding, as did the town of Great Barrington with a \$150 contribution. The tower was rebuilt in 1945 and a new 40' tower constructed in 1970. It was staffed until 1972. This tower was removed in 2003 due to disputes with the town officials. The tower was sold to a private land owner.

Mount Everett State Reservation is off East Street in Mount Washington with spectacular hiking to high elevations with glorious views. We parked at the Appalachian Trail/Mt. Everett trailhead and made our way up 943 feet of elevation to Mt. Everett summit and the old fire tower.

Mount Everett towers as the highest mountain on the Taconic Range at 2,620 feet. Ridge walking in unique pitch pines and scrub oak onto the summit is amazing on a narrow rock footpath with a nice breeze. It is about 2.5 miles in and back for the entire trip from the AT parking at Guilder Pond. An easy hike to views is going up the old road to the Mount Everett shelter and is only a one mile round trip.



Frankie the Frenchie is shown at the summit of Mount Everett.



This is an aerial view at the summit of Mount Everett where fire tower once stood.



The Hilltown Hikers look at the location of the original fire tower.



The original fire tower that was on Mount Everett.



A view from the summit of Mount Everett shows views of Bear, Brace and Frissel Mountains and the highest peaks of North West Connecticut.