

"Well done is better than well said." – Benjamin Franklin

# 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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## HUNTINGTON

### Fourth continuance hearing on gravel pit

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

A fourth continuance hearing concerning a proposed gravel pit on Huntington land owned by William Hull was held on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at Stanton Hall.

Present were members of the Zoning Board of Appeals Karon Hathaway (Chair), Deresa Helems, Jill Rose, Victoria Minella-Sena and Alicia Hackerson, along with Hull and Robert Levesque, President of R. Levesque Associates. Also attending were about 20 residents who live in close proximity to the proposed gravel pit. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss possible consultants to conduct various studies on the project and its impact on local residents.

Levesque submitted several documents including an update to a previous geological study from a prior gravel pit application; a response to concerns expressed by Jill Gaitenby Eldridge of the Huntington Historical Society about historical artifacts and archaeological finds, a response by Levesque as to silica dust concerns expressed by residents and a revised project narrative to the special permit application, which corrected details such as the number of anticipated trucks, originally stated as 32 trucks per day and amended to 32 trucks per week.

In response to Gaitenby Eldredge, Levesque assured the Historical Commission that they "fully recognize and value the significance of native stone features...and agree that such features should be preserved whenever possible." Levesque reported that they had thoroughly surveyed the proposed parcel and determined that there are no native stone features present.



Applicant Bill Hull shares information with ZBA Chair Karon Hathaway and a town resident at the fourth continuance hearing on a proposed gravel pit off of Goss Hill Road, held Sept. 10 at Stanton Hall.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

Hull added, "I'm glad that the town is interested in old foundations and wells; it is our policy to stay away from these artifacts. There is nothing in the five acre parcel." Hull further explained that there are three foundations, wells and some old stonewalls near the access road, leading him to believe that the access road they have used for timber removal and propose using for gravel removal was once a public way. Hull

said that he was unable to find anything in town records to substantiate this.

An updated geology report was submitted to the ZBA, which Levesque said confirms that there have been no changes from the original geological survey except for the road. Page 34 of the report, he noted, lists six places in town that have been dug in the past

HEARING, page 3

## BLANDFORD

### Highway Supt. presents list of equipment, road issues

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Highway Superintendent Rene Senecal brought to the Select Board at Monday night's meeting a lengthy list of road/culvert/line painting/pothole patching and equipment issues as well as outstanding bills facing his department.

Work to be done on Old Chester Road can be covered by Chapter 90 funds using an emergency condition exception so the cost will not come from the department's budget. He later asked the board to consider closing the road for the winter, but there is a new property owner on the road apparently building. No record of a building permit could be found, nor application/permission for a driveway. There is also the issue of connecting a new home to the water line.

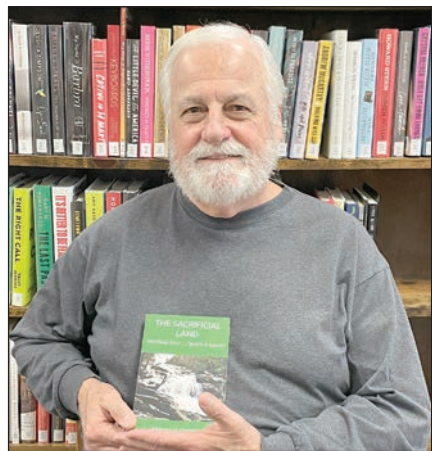
The board is checking on permits and state regulations to see if it is possible to close the road.

He asked that the board accept his declaration that Nye Brook Road issues present emergency action as well, which the board approved. This

ISSUES, page 6

## HUNTINGTON

### Steven V. Cormier to unveil newest local history book in October



Local author Steven V. Cormier holds his latest book on the history of the Westfield River in the hilltowns.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Steven V. Cormier, author of the "Life and Times of Parley B. Hutchins" will unveil a new local history book at the Huntington Fall Harvest Festival in October.

His latest volume, "The Sacrificial Land" is a deep dive into the history and impact of the Westfield River on the former towns of Knightville, Indian Hollow and Littleville from the 1800s through the present day.

Copies will be sold and signed on the Huntington town green at the harvest festival on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 5 and 6. Afterwards, Cormier will schedule speaking engagements at local libraries and community groups. The book is also

available for purchase on Amazon.

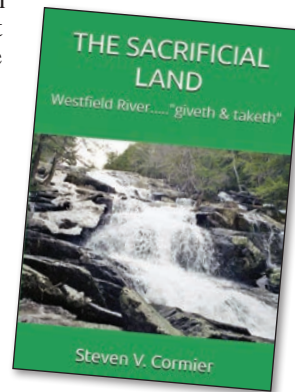
Included in the book is the Westfield River's early history with industry and commerce powered by watermills; in 1845; there were 28 mills located long the middle branch of the Westfield River between Chester and Huntington. It also reports on some of the volatile flooding that resulted in significant damage from the hilltowns all the way to West Springfield and the decisions to build Knightville and Littleville Dams for flood control, recreation and as a back-up water supply for the city of Springfield.

Cormier is relatively

new to the area and has now written two books about the region. "I did the Parley book, which was local," Cormier said. "I always thought it was so peaceful there along the river that I just started digging into its history." He said its flooding history came as a surprise.

The subtitle of the book, "Westfield River...giveth and taketh," refers to the river's beauty and tranquility, "giveth" and the flooding and sacrifice of the residents of Littleville, Knightville and Indian Hollow to support towns downstream "taketh."

"The big thing I wanted



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## HILLTOWNS

# Household hazardous waste collection set for Nov. 9

A household hazardous collection will be held for residents of Alford, Becket, Egremont, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Otis, Richmond, Sandisfield, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge on Saturday, Nov. 9 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Great Barrington Transfer Station, 601 Stockbridge Road, Route 7.

Items that residents of the above towns may bring at pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, insect sprays, killers, muriatic acid, flea powder, no-pest strips, chemical fertilizers, lighter fluid, moth balls, rust proofers, wood preservatives, wood strippers and stains, paint thinners, lead and oil based paint, varnish, full aerosol cans, sealants, adhesives, solvents, drain cleaners, oven cleaners, floor cleaners, metal polish,

arts and crafts supplies, photo chemicals, chemistry kits, rechargeable batteries, fuels/gasoline/kerosene, brake and transmission fluids, car wax, polish, engine degreaser, motor oil, swimming pool chemicals, driveway sealer, anti-freeze, car-lead acid batteries, thermometer, thermostats, other mercury, button batteries, rodent.

They should not bring latex paint, standard batteries, asbestos, fireworks

and explosives, ammunition, construction debris, propane/gas cylinders, smoke detectors, radioactive material, fire extinguishers fluorescent lamps, electronics, PCBs, medications, medical wastes and medical sharps.

Registration is required. People may register online at [www.tritown-health.org](http://www.tritown-health.org). For additional questions, people may call Tri-Town Health Department at 413-243-5540.

# Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts lists grant awards

The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts lists \$240,000 in grant awards this year and through 2026 to 17 organizations serving women, girls, transgender and gender-diverse people across Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.

CEO Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez explained that the Women's Fund's general grant cycle will provide a total of \$100,000 in awards to 13 organizations in 2024 and 2025. An additional four gifts totaling \$40,000 were also made from the organization's Young Women's Initiative for the current year.

The funding rounds were competitive, with applications received from 126 organizations.

"These grants will uplift the incred-

ible work being done by organizations throughout the region that are committed to addressing disparities and fostering inclusion for women, girls and gender-diverse individuals," said Pabón-Hernandez. "We are honored to offer grants that will support efforts in building more equitable and vibrant communities."

In the general grant cycle, the Women's Fund awarded grants in 10 communities throughout the region. Priority was given to organizations committed to gender and racial justice and equity as well as the philanthropic agency's key strategic pillars, economic security, parity in positions of power and leadership and freedom from gender-based violence. These grant dollars will support a broad range of organiza-

tions including small start-ups, grassroots organizations and well-established nonprofits.

The general grant cycle awards total \$200,000 over two years and provide unrestricted grants that can be used for general operations or program support. Grant recipients for this funding round include: 50 Arrow Gallery in Easthampton, A Queen's Narrative in Springfield, Berkshire Community Diaper Project in West Stockbridge, Elizabeth Freeman Center in Pittsfield, It Takes a Village in Huntington, Make-It Springfield, Mother Root Farm in West Cummington, New England Learning Center for Women in Transition in Greenfield, Pioneer Valley Workers Center in Northampton, Somali Bantu

Community in Springfield, Springfield No One Leaves/Nadie Se Mude, Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition in Greenfield and Western Massachusetts Parasol Patrol in Montague.

Lisa Goding, executive director of It Takes a Village, said, "This grant will help us strengthen our postpartum support programs, ensuring that every family, regardless of background or circumstances, has the resources needed to thrive."

Throughout the year, the Women's Fund will highlight grant recipients online. People may learn more by following the organization on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram and visiting [mywomensfund.org](http://mywomensfund.org).

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## MassDOT announces I-90 roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces that crews will be performing nighttime paving, guardrail and bridge repair operations along I-90 eastbound and westbound from now through Thursday night, Sept. 19.

Lane closures will be in effect, and traffic will be allowed through the work zones. The schedule for the work and lane closures is as follows:

In Otis and Blandford paving operations will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 23.0 to 27.0 now through Thursday night, Sept. 19 from 6 p.m.-6 a.m. each night with work concluding by Friday morning, Sept. 20 by 6 a.m. Bridge work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 22.5, now through Thursday night, Sept. 19, from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. each night with work concluding on Friday morning, Sept. 20 at 5 a.m.

In Stockbridge and West Stockbridge bridge repair work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound from mile marker 1.0 to 3.0, now through Thursday night, Sept. 19 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. each night with work concluding on Friday morning, Sept. 20 by 5 a.m.

Guardrail work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 3.0 to 6.0, now through Thursday night, Sept.

19, from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. each night with work concluding on Friday morning, Sept. 20 by 5 a.m.

In Lee, bridge repair work will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 8.1 to 8.4, now through Thursday night, Sept. 19 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m. each night with work concluding on Friday morning, Sept. 20 by 5 a.m.

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](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.

## State officials warn about West Nile, EEE

SPRINGFIELD – Now more than ever, simple precautions can save lives, say medical providers at American Family Care centers in Massachusetts, where state health officials have turned up the urgency around mosquito concerns.

Recent warnings have prompted some communities to reschedule sports practices and other outdoor activities, and even set curfews while mosquito spraying is underway. "Not all mosquitoes carry disease, but the potential is there, and it can be serious," said Dr. Andrew Koslow, associate medical director of American Family Care in Massachusetts. "Even though eastern equine encephalitis is rare, it can lead to long term complications. People should look out for symptoms like fever, headache, vomiting, diarrhea and seizures."

An 80-year-old man from Oxford and a Plymouth woman in her 30s were diagnosed with EEE last month. There are no vaccines or treatment for the disease and

according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 30% of people, who become infected with EEE die. State officials also put out a warning about an elevated risk of West Nile virus, which experts say is less serious, but dangerous for people with certain medical conditions.

Dr. Koslow said using a mosquito repellent is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself. "Choose a product that contains DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, BioKage, UD or picaridin," he said. "It's especially important when participating in outdoor activities around dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active."

Experts recommend wearing loose-fitting clothes with long sleeves, pants and socks. Homeowners can mosquito-proof property by draining anything with standing water, such as rain gutters, tires and birdbaths. It's also important to check for holes in window and door screens.



# HUNTINGTON

## HEARING

from page 1

along the same river valley. Also updated were increased gravel prices and removal costs, since the original report was filed. Finally, the narrative now states that there will be no blasting at the site.

Most of Levesque's reporting was on the issue of silica dust. He shared the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's guidance on controlling silica dust in construction, which states, "using heavy equipment and utility vehicles for earthmoving tasks such as grading and excavating does not in most cases generate hazardous levels of respirable crystalline silica dust." But to further alleviate public concern, Levesque stated that they are prepared to install a PurpleAir monitor at the site, which continuously will measure air quality data and wind speed both during and after work shifts. Further, he said they would accept a second condition that excavation would not take place if wind speeds exceed 10 m.p.h., which would be reported through the PurpleAir monitor. For transparency, the monitor's data would be accessible to anyone in real time on the web. Levesque also provided an OSHA fact sheet on methods to control silica dust in construction and excavation.

Both Levesque and Hull confirmed again that there would be no blasting at the gravel pit, nor grinding or crushing

of materials on the site. Gravel would be moved for processing to Hilltown Sand and Gravel on Route 112, who would operate the pit. "If they encounter rock, they'll stop," Levesque said.

Helems asked if they had experience with the PurpleAir monitoring system at their other gravel pits. When they answered no, she suggested that they run a trial of the equipment at another existing site to see how well it works, which was agreed to by Levesque and Hull.

Other studies that the ZBA had suggested were on impact on the aquifer or local wells, a hydraulic study to determine water runoff, traffic, a sound impact study and any evidence of endangered or threatened species. On the last, Levesque reported that the parcel has not been identified as having any, as mapped by the Natural Heritage of Endangered Species Program. Levesque provided contact people for the ZBA on this matter.

Hathaway reported that they have reached out to a number of potential consultants for these studies, but have had few responses. Levesque offered to give names and direct phone lines of possible consultants to the ZBA to assist.

Hathaway then opened the meeting up to questions from area residents. "We've gotten good, passionate feedback from townspeople at the previous hear-

ings," she said.

In answering questions, Hull and Levesque confirmed that this would be the only application for a gravel pit from Hull Forestlands, with Hull reporting there are no other significant sources of gravel on his property. He agreed that this could be a stipulation of the application's approval.

They also affirmed that they expect the project to take around five years to complete. This will be dependent upon how frequently they have to cease excavation due to wind speed or air quality. Hathaway added that, if granted, the special permit would stipulate a term of five years with a review at the one year mark.

Resident John Garriepy expressed doubt about the OSHA study, saying that the data referred to effects of silica dust on workers over eight-hour shifts but did not look at its 24-hour a day impact on nearby residents. Another resident brought up concerns about Jake Brakes on the trucks, which are noisy. Hathaway said that they can request DOT signage that stipulates that Jake Brakes cannot be used.

Even with questions from attendees, the meeting ended in just under an hour. The next continuance hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. at Stanton Hall.

## COA hosts upcoming events

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Council on Aging will be hosting the following events at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road.

Becoming a Bird Watcher will be presented by Lois Kiraly on Wednesday, Sept. 25 at 1 p.m. On Saturday, Sept. 28 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., the annual health fair will be held with representatives from local health organizations, a flu clinic and massages.

The Fall Birthday Celebration featuring cake and Bingo will be on Tuesday, Oct. 8 at 1 p.m. On Wednesday, Oct. 9 at 2 p.m., Jaane Doe and David Bond Engelhard will perform at the Hilltown Memory Café. All events are free and open to residents of any community.

For more information, people may call Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-5283.

## Cultural Council accepting grant applications

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Cultural Council is now accepting applications for the FY 2025 grant cycle.

These Local Cultural Council grants can be used to support activities including exhibits, festivals, school-based events, workshops, lectures, virtual and media projects. The HCC receives funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. This year's allocation for Huntington is \$5,700.

Applications are submitted online at <https://massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com> and are due on Wednesday, Oct. 16.

For more information on the application process and to view local priorities, people may visit <https://massculturalcouncil.org>, call the MCC Help Desk at 617-858-2721 or email [MCC\\_help\\_desk@art.state.ma.us](mailto:MCC_help_desk@art.state.ma.us) or Lynn Winsor at [huntingtonculturalcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:huntingtonculturalcouncil@gmail.com).

## BOOK

from page 1

to do was bring out the feelings, especially of the Littleville people and what they gave up," Cormier said. "Sadly, they weren't really recognized at the groundbreaking or dedication." Cormier made an effort to correct this oversight in his book's dedication, which reads "The Sacrificial Land is dedicated to all of the inhabitants of Knightville, Indian Hollow and Littleville who sacrificed their land and homesteads so that others could live in peace surrounding the unexpected rage and ultimate destruction introduced by the Westfield River."

Cormier reports that residents displaced by Littleville Dam fared much better than the Knightville area homesteaders, by receiving a fair market value for their land and homes and by having their community's two cemeteries relocated via a professional and compassionate process.

In contrast, many Knightville and Indian Hollow residents weren't offered any compensation and plans for cemetery relocations were not proposed, as the land would not be flooded full time. Those who were offered payment were

initially offered \$4 per acre. Jury trials in Massachusetts saw this differently, resulting in higher payments to displaced landowners and requiring cemetery relocations.

As part of his research, Cormier spoke with Jean Elder Bush who was in her late teens when her family had to move from Littleville. He also relied on Pat Nugent's writings in the Country Journal from that period and hopes to someday meet with her.

The book also covers efforts to produce hydro-electric power at Littleville, which never materialized, despite its potential benefit to Huntington and the role the city of Springfield played in shaping the final purposes of Littleville Lake as their back-up water supply. Initial plans for Littleville Lake included two swimming beaches and a bathhouse. Once the project shifted to address the needs of Springfield, recreational plans were greatly reduced.

A pumping station was constructed on Route 20 in Huntington and four miles of piping was installed to move water from Littleville to Cobble

Mountain Reservoir. Springfield's water needs not only halted hydro-electric and recreational uses, the author reports that the city never paid for its agreed-upon share of the cost of Littleville's construction or even the annual interest due on those funds. Under the agreement, Springfield would be required to begin paying their share once they actually started moving water for the city's use.

Although the system was successfully tested after installation and pains were taken by Springfield to make clear that this was only a test and did not make the system "operational" and every five years afterward, testing appears to have ended in 1993. At that time a section of pipe dislodged in Blandford and the resulting spillage caused a fish kill in a local brook.

Cormier could find no further evidence of testing after that year and says that Springfield has never used the system for their water needs. The Westfield River's designation as a Wild & Scenic River is also covered in the book, along with current recreational uses and landmarks.

## NOTICE

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

## GARAGE/TAG SALE

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# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



### Widow's benefits vs. benefits from my ex-spouse

Dear Rusty

In November I will be 60 and eligible for widow's benefits. My late husband's Social Security was approximately \$2,300 when he passed around 7 years ago.

FYI, my ex-husband is still working and will probably receive the highest SS when he retires in about five years, we were married for more than 10 years. Either of these is more than my own Social Security will be, so how does this work? Will this turn into my Social Security? Can I start on one and switch to the other later?

Signed Wondering Widow

Dear Wondering Widow

Provided you have not remarried before age 60, you have a choice which benefit to receive – either your deceased husband's benefit as his surviving spouse or your ex-spouse benefit from your ex-husband while he is still living. Taking your survivor benefit from your deceased husband will likely be best because it is based on 100% of his SS amount when he died, whereas your ex-spouse benefit from your living ex-husband is based on 50% of his Full Retirement Age entitlement. To get an ex-spouse benefit from your ex-husband, which you can't get until you are 62, your own SS retirement benefit would need to be less than 50% of your ex's FRA entitlement.

As you know, you will be eligible for survivor widow's benefits from your deceased husband when you are 60, but be aware that by taking your survivor benefit at 60, it will be reduced for early claiming. Rather than 100% of your husband's SS benefit, at age 60 you will get about 71.5%. Your surviving spouse benefit reaches maximum at your Full Retirement Age of 67 and will grow to that point, but will be reduced if taken prior to that.

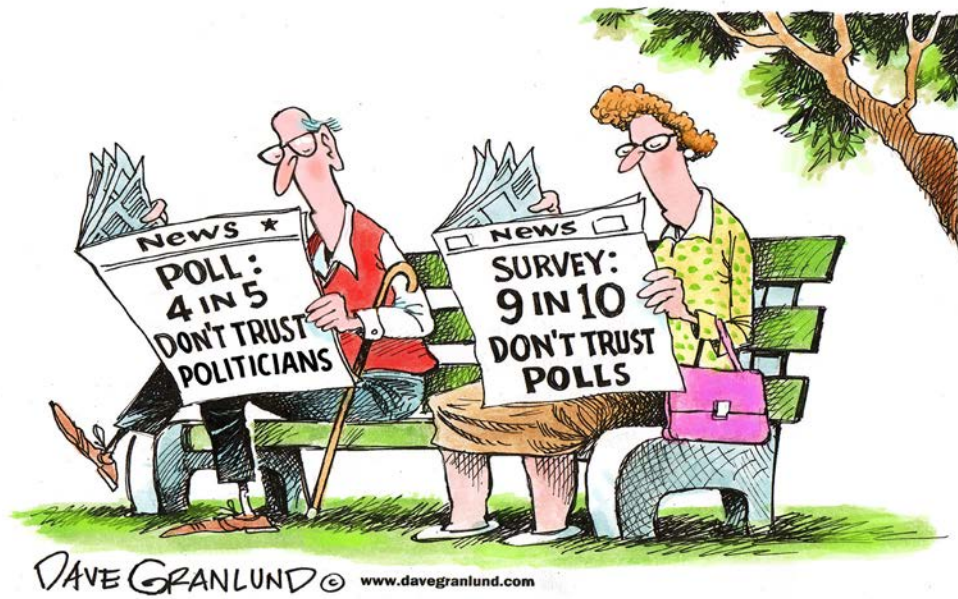
Also, if you are working, Social Security's "earnings test" will apply until you reach your full retirement age, so your plans for working may influence your decision on when to claim your widow's benefit. If you exceed the earnings limit (\$22,320 for 2024; it changes annually), Social Security will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over

SECURITY, 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.



## GUEST COLUMN

### A blueberry question



“My name is Ed and I have a question that I hope you can answer: I have a small part of my back yard where three tomato plants used to grow. This year I bought a blueberry plant which I never have grown before. I planted it in May of this year and as of mid August I still have not had any blueberries yet. The plant actually looks the same as it did in May. I water the plant every day and just wondering why nothing has grown yet. I actually am considering just letting the blueberry plant stay as is through the winter and maybe by early 2025 there might be some blueberries. Any comment is much appreciated. Thanks!”

Thank you for your question, Ed. I am

thinking that your blueberry plant might need a bit more time adjusting to its surroundings, and maybe a correction on soil pH.

Read on to learn about that.

Blueberries, more than tomatoes, are picky about pH. They are ericaceous, or “acid-loving,” just like rhododendrons and azaleas. In this part of the country our soil tends to be acidic, but blueberries like an even lower pH than most soils have, to the tune of 4.8.

To find out the pH of your soil, have it tested by the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension service. If you specify at testing time that you wish to grow blueberries, they will give you advice on how to amend the soil for that crop.

Some amendments used to lower pH include sulfur, peat moss and leaf humus among others.

I would also recommend that you apply mulch around the blueberry bush to a depth of four inches. As you know, mulch will conserve soil moisture as well as continue to add

GARDEN, page 5



Common nighthawk

A Brimfield resident emailed that on Wednesday, Aug. 28, “I sat outside in front of the house and saw 35 common nighthawks, a group of 5, 7, 22 and a straggler. The group of 22 flew around overhead for 2-3 minutes, fluttery flight, erratic, back and forth, round and round.” He said he has sat out three other nights and not seen a single nighthawk.

The common nighthawk is 10 inches long and is often seen flying at dusk or dawn and sometimes during the day. They have long, thin pointed wings with a conspicuous white bar near the tips of their wings.

Their flight tends to be high over 40 feet with slow, deliberate wingbeats. The male has a white band near the tip of his tail, which the female lacks. They have mottled feathers with white under their chin. Nighthawks scoop up flying insects when in flight. Sometimes they are seen feeding near city lights, which attract insects.

The common nighthawk gives a nasal “peernt” call. The lesser nighthawk is similar to the common, but flies much lower, 10 to 20 feet and has thin, rounded wings

BACKYARD, page 5

## Election letters to the editor welcome

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 Monday to be considered for that

Friday'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 news-

paper 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.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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



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# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN

### About those electric bills in the Hilltowns

By Kathryn Koegel  
Correspondent

With Western Massachusetts heading into a dry and blissful Indian summer of temperatures in the 70s in the day and 50s at night, it's almost hard to remember the dog days of July.

According to NASA, the hottest day ever recorded here was July 22, 2024. Western Massachusetts experienced four official heatwaves, which are defined as three or more days of 90+ degree heat. August arrived with some relief, but there was absolute shock of Eversource bills early in the month.

I live in a smallish one story house approximately 1,200 square feet with central AC, new windows and doors, ceiling fans, plenty of insulation in the attic and cellular shades to cut down on the rays. I hate cold rooms and keep my AC on at a steady 77 degrees.

So nothing prepared me for the record tall green bar on my Eversource bill. I had used 10.7% more electricity from the previous July. My total bill was a new high since I have lived here of \$279.

Turns out I was not the only Eversource customer suffering from sticker shock. The Hilltown Community Forum group on Facebook was filled with outrage, sage advice and as with so much of social media, a whole lot of misinformation. What was clear was that these rates were forcing a whole lot of Hilltown residents to

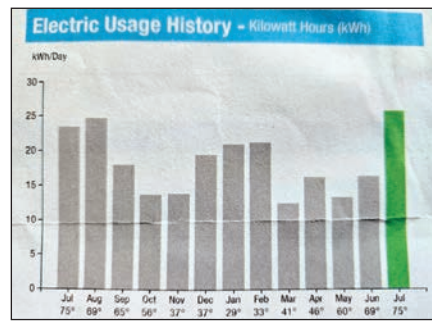
contemplate going solar.

Fortuitously, a few weeks later, my dogs barked their heads off. I own what can euphemistically be referred to as an "attack poodle" at what I assumed was an Amazon package. Two cheerful young men were approaching. Oh, no, they were going to try to convert me to some religion. I had this one wrong. They were not missionaries of some deity, just of the future of energy. "Have you considered solar? they queried? "Well, yes," I said. "Tell me what you got?"

I agreed to a home visit from solar company. And to add fuel to the fire and ensure that I got quotes from multiple companies, I clicked on a Massachusetts solar info ad in my Facebook feed and input my home address and cell phone number. It was eerie to see the roof of my own house from Google Maps appear with a schemata of where the solar panels would go.

This last act of personal data entry unleashed a torrent of cold calls at all hours of the day or night, typically from area codes of places I once lived. People from all over the world want me to have solar. It's a nightmare.

To spare readers the time and aggravation of way too much information and some very contradictory sales pitches, this series examines the experience of Hilltowners, who have gotten solar along with my own personal energy quest. It includes the good, the bad and the ugly, including solar panels that are supposed



This portion of an electric bill shows electric usage history in kilowatt hours.

Submitted photo

to shed snow and don't, leaving the owner up on a roof in a driving storm.

I interviewed three solar companies. There are hundreds of solar companies vying for your money and one of my qualifications was that these companies stay in business throughout the length of the 25+ years these panels are on my house. I also interviewed a spokesperson from Eversource to get to the bottom of those July bills and had lengthy talks with locals, who had gotten solar.

First off, what happened in July? According to Eversource spokesperson Priscilla Riss: "A customer's total bill is ultimately driven by how much energy that customer uses which on average increases for our residential customers in Massachusetts by about 40% during the summer months with air conditioners, fans and other appliances working overtime to keep things cool inside. Higher usage is the key factor at play here.

**ELECTRIC BILLS**, page 15

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Scam victim warns others

We were offered a couple of truckloads of road millings/reprocessed asphalt, no charge for labor, just the cost of the asphalt. They said they "didn't want to take it home." Our driveway has needed some work, so we jumped at the offer. How much would it cost us-we asked more than six times while they worked on our driveway. We were told "not to worry, we'll take care of you." We asked "but would it be \$200 or \$20,000, please give us some idea. He said, "we can't give you an amount yet, we have to wait and see."

This was a lengthy ordeal, but the short of it is, once they were almost done, they measured it up and we were given the total amount due, \$12,000. No way, we eventually got the price down to \$8,000. A family member was appalled that this had happened, made contact with the company and we agreed to settling for \$3,000 back.

It was strange that they couldn't give us a price ahead of time, yet their business card said that they give "free estimates." Our fault-we fell for their scam. Never again! Warning to all-if it seems to good to be true, it probably is. If they can't give you a price up front, don't do it; they are fast talkers which creates a very confusing scenario. We weren't the first ones to fall for this scheme-don't be the next one!

Irv Colby  
Worthington

## SECURITY

from page 4

the limit.

They "take away" by withholding future benefits until the penalty is satisfied, which means you would go some number of months without benefits. And, if you substantially exceed the earnings limit you may even be temporarily ineligible for any SS benefits until you earn less or reach your FRA - the earnings test goes away at your FRA.

If you claim your surviving spouse benefits from your deceased husband first, and your ex-husband later dies, you do have the option to switch to the higher survivor benefit from your ex-husband. In effect, if both husbands are deceased, you have a choice which benefit to take and, obviously, you'd chose the higher of the two.

None of this, however, happens automatically. To claim your surviving

spouse benefit you will need to contact Social Security directly at 1-800-772-1213 or call your local SS office to make an appointment to apply for widow's benefits.

*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 [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

## GARDEN

from page 4

organic matter and nutrients to the soil as it breaks down.

For blueberries the best choice is well rotted sawdust. Grass clippings and straw are also suitable but need to be replaced more quickly than sawdust.

A word of caution: make sure the sawdust is well rotted or it could potentially burn tender stems as well as rob nitrogen from the plant it is intending to help.

Blueberries can self-pollinate, but for the best berry production plant at least two different blueberry varieties within 10 feet of one another. If, for example, the variety you have ripens mid season, purchase another mid season bush, so that the flowers will be blooming and therefore pollinated at the same time.

You will be delighted with larger fruit and more of it!

There would be some crossover with early and later varieties, but with only two plants I'd err on the side of caution and just purchase another of the same season whatever that is. If you don't know, don't worry about it, just plant

another bush regardless.

The last thing I'd like to mention is that it usually takes two-three years for blueberries to produce fruit even if all of their needs are being met. It has to do with the maturity of the branches and whether they are productive.

The most productive branches tend to be around three years old. I'm not sure how old your plant was upon installation, but maybe it just needs a little more time.

Well, we covered a lot of material here, but I can sense how badly you'd like to see your bushes bare fruit. By making a few minor changes and providing the one plant you have with a friend you will hopefully see berries in a couple of years at the most.

Thanks for the question, Ed!

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

## BACKYARD

from page 4

with the wing bar nearer the tip than its cousin.

The female common nighthawk lays two olive brown eggs with dark marks in a nest on gravelly soil, fields or gravel rooftops. They inhabit forests, plains and urban areas. Lesser nighthawks prefer rivers, lakes and desert scrub.

### Warren bird sightings

In Warren there are still great egrets at the pond on New Reed Street and a juvenile osprey was seen Friday, Aug. 30 at the pond on South Street. It was perched in a tree eating a fish.

### Cooper's hawk

My daughter had what most likely was a Cooper's hawk in her yard in late August. She heard a knocking on her basement slider. When she looked over her deck, the hawk was on the ground by the slider. She went downstairs to check on him and he flew up to her deck and then went into a tree before flying off.

### Loon chick rescue

On Aug. 22, Loon Preservation Committee received a call from Pawtuckaway Lake. Lake residents had found a loon chick that had beached itself on an island with no parents in sight. The chick had fishing line tangled around its neck, head and bill.

"As they called, the residents were in the process of untangling the chick and they asked us for guidance regarding what to do next. We were thankful that they had noticed and were helping the loon, and were also thankful that they had called us. Sometimes when loons are tangled in fishing line, there are additional injuries from hooks or tackle that are not immediately obvious when looking at the bird externally



Cooper's hawk

and we wanted to make sure that was not the case with this loon."

"LPC's Pemigewasset Region Biologist, Jayden Mowery, was able to meet with the rescuers and collect the chick from them. He then brought it to VCA Capital Area Veterinary Emergency and Specialty (CAVES), where he met up with Maria Colby and CAVES veterinary staff to x-ray the loon. We were glad to have taken this extra step to ensure the chick was okay, because the x-ray revealed something that was not easily visible during the external exam: the chick had a fishing hook embedded in the flesh of its mouth, under its tongue."

An x-ray of the chick's head and neck revealed a large fishing hook embedded in the tissue of its mouth, underneath its tongue. It was removed and the chick was returned to the lake where it joined its parents.

*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.*

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## BLANDFORD

# Hunting permit applications available starting Monday

By **Mary Kronholm**  
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – The Blandford Conservation Commission will be available Monday, Sept. 23 from 6-7 p.m. at the Town Hall, 1 Russell State Road, to receive deer hunting permit applications for town-owned Conservation properties.

Those properties include the Knittel Conservation Area on Herrick Road, Shepard Farm Conservation Area on Route 23 and the Long Pond Conservation Area on North Blandford Road.

If more applications are received than the allotted number of permits for each area, the permits will be selected on a random basis.

If additional permits are available after Thursday, Sept. 26, they will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis by contacting the Conservation Commission. Applications will only be accepted from those that present a valid Massachusetts hunting or sporting license at the time of application and the license/customer number must be entered on the application. Each applicant must personally submit their own

application.

Successful applicants will be issued a permit to hunt in only one of the above Conservation properties and only for the 2024 Deer Hunting seasons. Permit applications will be available from the Conservation Commission at the Town Hall on Monday, Sept. 23 at 6 p.m.

For further information or questions, please call the Conservation Commission at 413-848-4279, ext. 202.

**Hunting on Private Property**

Town bylaws stipulate that there is “no hunting on any private without written permission by the property owner of

the land upon, which permitted hunting will take place.” Local, state and environmental police have power of enforcement and arrest and violators are subject to fines

Written permission for hunting on private property must be renewed on an annual basis.

These permits are available at the Town Hall on the door of the police department. There are four sections, one for the hunter to carry on their person, one for the dashboard of the hunter’s car, a copy for the landowner and one for the police.

## ISSUES

from page 1

action will cover the repairs to the road required as a result of the landslide earlier this year and includes replacement of a damaged culvert and separate expense for new guardrails.

The department will fill potholes on Cobble Mountain Road next week and other road dents as well. Single lines, at the minimum fog lines or a center line, will be painted on every major paved town road, according to Senecal.

The department’s mower is “the most dangerous mower I’ve ever seen,” he told the board. The mower has an arm that goes over rails to cut roadside growth, but it is rear mounted and puts the operator at risk as he tries to guide it by either looking backwards or using a rear-view mirror.

“Senecal would like to replace it and is working with the company who put it together. “I’d be happy if they just bought it back,” he said. He also discussed the possibility of leasing a mower for a year or two to give the town the opportunity to plan for a capital purchase.

The Number 9 truck, a 350 pickup, is in need of attention. The front end needs shocks, the driver’s seat is broken and the passenger side door handle is broken. The tailgate and trailer hitch are also “not good” and Senecal would like to put an aluminum flatbed body on it at

a cost of about \$12,000. “This would be much more advantageous for the town,” he said.

Moving to new business the board considered Senecal’s request to move Mario Godbout from the Water Department to the Highway Department. There are union issues to consider and Senecal said he had already discussed the possibility of adding Godbout to the department, but wage would be an issue as his current wage is higher than what it would be if he joined the union. “This is not a closed shop,” Senecal told the board and Godbout’s employment with Highway is something Senecal is positive about. “I think he’s a pretty good fit,” he said.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrara told the board that Council on Aging Director Margit Mikuski is the chair of the Americans with Disabilities Act commission for the town.

Permiteyes has been updated to allow Conservation and the Highway Superintendent access so they can see “what’s going on there.”

Elm Electric is still reviewing the Town Hall electric problems.

She brought to the board’s attention the message regarding “free stuff” left by the side of the road at the corner of Nye Brook and Russell Stage roads. The usable items are gone but there is still

stuff there. She spoke with Chief Dubiel and the Board of Health regarding this.

Cousineau said he had viewed the area.

The town is not in the business of picking up trash. Cousineau said the town needs a bylaw to address this problem, suggesting people can’t leave items out for more than three or four days.

Nye Brook Road resident Tricia Bergland was at the meeting and addressed the problem. She said that there are tires and rims still at the roadside that have been there since May. “It’s just junk,” she said.

This has been going on, according to Bergland, since the new owners moved in four years ago.

Ferrara gave the board an updated social media policy for review. It will be reviewed and voted on next week.

The grant for the Water Department Shared Water Services report was due today and Ferrara did submit it, but was not able to include Blandford’s accounts for the grant. She was not able to reconcile any numbers with Chester. She was directed to the town’s new financial module, VADAR Municipal Finance Software. She received information finally Monday afternoon at 3:45 p.m. from the accountant, but the report was due at that same time and she had to use

Chester’s figures, which did include the town’s.

Moving forward, Ferrara needs to know what to expect from CPA Kinsherb’s firm. Letendre wants to have Kinsherb attend a meeting, preferably via zoom because he gets \$750 to come out to Blandford and is contractually limited to six visits a year.

The town needs training on VADAR as well as the ability to find information on vendors, payments, etc. The town pays for the new module and Ferrara is working directly with a VADAR representative now.

She also pointed out that the accountant should approve funds are available for contracted services before the town signs off.

In other business, George Reichert updated the board on progress for the community day event that will refurbish the Volunteer Fire Department Training Center and Bicentennial Park. He is looking for volunteers to help, to sign people in, to help with refreshments. He told the board the Blandford Country Store/Bistro was providing mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks as well as lunches for all the volunteers. If anyone can help out, either on the day, Saturday, Sept. 28, or beforehand, he asked that he be telephoned at 413-848-2074.

## CHESTER

# Hilltown Hikers to hold heritage hike

CHESTER – The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers will hold a special Housatonic Heritage event to hike on a section of the Chester and Becket Railroad on Sunday, Sept. 29 at 1 p.m.

Participants should park on Hampden Street at the Chester and Becket Trailhead. From junction of Routes 20 and 102 in Lee, people should take Route 20 east and drive 18 miles to the Chester/Becket town line, turn right on Hampden Street to the trailhead. GPS 42.279567, -72.988070. The hike is an easy 2.5 miles in and back with mostly flat terrain on dirt.

Built in 1896 as a 5.25-mile spur off the Boston & Albany Railroad to deliver granite from the Becket Quarries to the Chester

finishing works.

Both Chester and Becket issued bond stock in the quarry company to help in building this line because there was money to be made from the “Chester Blue Granite” for monuments and gravestones. This railroad was blasted out of the steep and winding side of the Walker Brook Valley. The first locomotive to run on this line was a wood burner, eventually upgraded to a coal burning locomotive.

Hikers will see the remains of a wooden trestle still standing on the trail and also learn how this route was used in Chester’s Emery and Granite industry. After the hike they will stop to see the train model at the Chester Railway Museum on Prospect Street. Donations for the newly conserved Chester

Granite Company Finishing Works property are greatly appreciated.

People should register per car load by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com>. Maps and bottled water provided. Well behaved dogs are allowed. This event is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$10. More details are available by visiting [www.hilltownhikers.com](http://www.hilltownhikers.com). People may email [westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com](mailto:westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com) or call/text 413-302-0312 if they have any questions. As always hikers should be prepared for rocks, mud and roots and bring trekking poles

For those that want to hike every weekend year round become a Hilltown Hiker member by visiting [www.hilltownhikers.com](http://www.hilltownhikers.com).

# Library hosts salve making workshop on Sept. 26

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library presents the “Make Your Own Skin Salve” event on Thursday, Sept. 26 from 6-8 p.m. at Blue Skye Wellness, 26B Main St.

For those who suffer from achy muscles or joints or problem skin, certified aromatherapist, Kay Judge, leads participants in creating a soothing skin salve made from a combination of essential oils, beeswax and herbs. Space is limited to the first eight participants so people should reserve their spot soon by leaving their name and number at 413-354-7808. This program is generously sponsored by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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# FLORENCE



More than 50 people attended a dedication ceremony for three Habitat Homes recently in Florence. Submitted photo

## Dedication ceremony held for Habitat Homes

FLORENCE – More than 50 people were on hand Sunday to celebrate with three young families the completion of their affordable homes, homes they had a hand in building themselves.

The first-time homebuyers will close on these homes before the end of the month and at that point the Burts Pit Road neighborhood will ring with the laughter of its newest residents, eight children and teenagers and their parents.

Representatives from the city of Northampton, which donated the land to Pioneer Valley Habitat, financial and in-kind supporters and community members, who had a literal hand in the building of the homes were among the speakers. They shared with those assembled some of the background of the project and many of the pivotal moments along the way in working with these families with low income who spent the last thirteen months building and getting ready to buy their first homes.

The solar-powered all-electric homes were open for the public to view and members of the build team and regular volunteers were on hand and could talk about the nuts and bolts of construction.

In her warm welcome to the families and everyone assembled, Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra said, "It is absolutely critical we maintain a diverse housing landscape in our community. Creating opportunities like this is so important, we all have to work together on all fronts." State Representative Lindsay Sabadosa agreed. "The homes that Habitat builds are a true testament to community coming together to support affordable homeownership. I have had the privilege of volunteering at this site with my daughter and have seen firsthand the legions of individuals who are needed to make each home a reality. This speaks to how committed we are to making Northampton a place where people can afford to live and addressing the housing crisis, one nail at a time," she said after the ceremony.

Other speakers included Chadd Meerbergen, head of the carpentry department at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Brian Adams from the Northampton Community Preservation Committee and Bruce Coldham, FAIA, chair of the project's volunteer build team. Each of the families' Habitat mentors spoke eloquently of the sacrifices made and hard work put in by each future homeowner, and the homeowners in turn expressed gratitude to everyone who had made this opportunity possible and especially to the community volunteers, who rolled up their sleeves alongside them for thirteen months to build their houses.

As cows grazed in the distance, Greenfield and Northampton Cooperative Bank CEO and President Tony Worden spoke for everyone there when he concluded his remarks with these words for the homeowner families: "I wish you many years of happiness here."

Since 1989, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity has built decent, affordable homes with 58 families with low incomes in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. They build homes with volunteer labor and donations of material, supplies, land and services. At the onset of homebuilding, a family is selected and enters into a long term partnership with Pioneer Valley Habitat. Future homeowners contribute 250 hours of labor during the construction of their home alongside volunteers from the community. Upon completion, the home is sold to the family with an affordable mortgage. Habitat is a hand-up, not a hand-out; the organization has a perpetual legacy in that all mortgage funds received are reinvested to build more homes. People may learn more by visiting [www.pvhabitat.org](http://www.pvhabitat.org).

## Hampshire Regional School District Offers Meals at No Cost for All Students

Hampshire Regional School District participates in the [National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program]. As part of this program Hampshire Regional High School, Wm. E. Norris offers healthy meals every school day. The Commonwealth is supplementing National School Lunch Program funds to ensure all students have access to healthy school meals in Massachusetts, regardless of household income. We ask that families complete a Meal Benefit Application as this provides data for school funding and community resources. The results from each Meal Benefit Application is used to ensure sustainability for this program.

Qualifications for children to receive free or re-

duced-price meals include: belonging to a household whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, belonging to a household that receives public assistance, or if the child is homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, or participates in a Head Start or Even Start pre-K program.

Household size and income criteria are used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits if the household does not receive assistance or the children are not in the other categories mentioned above. Children can get free or reduced-price meals if the household's gross income falls at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guideline chart.

| FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2024-2025 |  |         |         |   |         |         |
|--|--|---------|---------|---|---------|---------|
| Household size   | Maximum Household Income Eligible for Free Meals |         |         | Maximum Household Income Eligible for Reduced Price Meals |         |         |
|  | Yearly   | Monthly | Weekly  | Yearly  | Monthly | Weekly  |
| 1  | \$19,578   | \$1,632 | \$377   | \$27,861  | \$2,322 | \$536   |
| 2  | \$26,572   | \$2,215 | \$511   | \$37,814  | \$3,152 | \$728   |
| 3  | \$33,566   | \$2,798 | \$646   | \$47,767  | \$3,981 | \$919   |
| 4  | \$40,560   | \$3,380 | \$780   | \$57,720  | \$4,810 | \$1,110 |
| 5  | \$47,554   | \$3,963 | \$915   | \$67,673  | \$5,640 | \$1,302 |
| 6  | \$54,548   | \$4,546 | \$1,049 | \$77,626  | \$6,469 | \$1,493 |
| 7  | \$61,542   | \$5,129 | \$1,184 | \$87,579  | \$7,299 | \$1,685 |
| 8  | \$68,536   | \$5,712 | \$1,318 | \$97,532  | \$8,128 | \$1,876 |
| Each additional person:                                    | \$6,994  | \$583   | \$135   | \$9,953   | \$830   | \$536   |

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households can fill out the application and return it to the school unless the household has already received notification that their children are approved for free meals this year. Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available 19 Stage Rd. Westhampton, MA 01027, Pomeroy Meadow Rd. Southhampton, MA 01073 and online at [www.hrhs.org](http://www.hrhs.org) and [www.wmnorris.org](http://www.wmnorris.org)

Only one application is required for all children in the household and the information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by the school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions. In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

Families can apply for benefits at any time. If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Guidelines. Contact Carol Inman at any time to request an application.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, Carol Inman/Kathleen Keady will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to Lauren Hotz, Hampshire Regional High School 19 Stage Rd. Westhampton MA or Aliza Puta Wm. E. Norris Pomeroy Meadow Rd. Southhampton, MA 01073

When known to Hampshire Regional School District households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals if they are members of households receiving assistance from the:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), if the State program meets Federal standards.

An application is not required for free meal benefits for Assistance Program participants and all the children in the household are eligible for free meal benefits. If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, or if a household does not receive a notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school to have free meal benefits extended to them. Participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but they will need to turn in an application including household size and total income.

When known to Hampshire Regional School District households will also be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is considered "Other Source Categorically Eligible", because the child is categorized, as defined by law as:

- Foster
- Homeless,
- Migrant,
- Runaway,
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, or
- Enrolled in an eligible pre-kindergarten class.

If any children were not listed on the notice of eligibility, the household should contact the school about their eligibility through the list above, or should submit an income application.

Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact the school if the household chooses to decline the benefits.

For more information, you may call Carol Inman at 413-437-5631 or e-mail at [cinman2@hr-k12.org](mailto:cinman2@hr-k12.org)

### Community Eligibility Provision

Hampshire Regional School District will be participating in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. As part of this program, Westhampton Elementary, Anne T. Dunphy, New Hingham Elementary will offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST to the students due to the implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision for school year 2024-2025. Students will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit a household application.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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# SOUTH WORTHINGTON

## Architect turned fiber artist makes kaleidoscopic quilts

By Kathryn Koegel  
Correspondent

Around a sharp corner just past the micro-village of South Worthington on Ireland Street you encounter a sky blue door with vegetation growing thick about it.

The white house appears tiny and indeed is very old. According to resident and fiber artist Kathy Ford, it likely dates to the 1790s and is a 28 x 28foot post and beam house. That door opens into a kaleidoscopic workshop of fabric both on tables and the walls.

It's an early September Sunday and Ford is dyeing fabric into the rich colors of the quilts that hang on the wall. Some look as if they are referencing the jewel tones of a kaleidoscope while others are more clearly driven by the forests and fields of the Hilltowns.

This award-winning artist has taken what has been considered a quintessential American homespun, what-women-did-in-their-spare-time-with-friends, form and exploded it into multi-layered canvases of fabric. The sixth annual Hilltown Arts Alliance Alliance Open Studio Tour will include Ford's studio, completed works and works in progress, on Saturday, Oct. 5 and Sunday, Oct. 6 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Ford, who was born in Western New York State but moved to New York City right after architecture school at Harvard, started making quilts as a hobby after her daughter was born in 1991. She was living in a loft in Manhattan and practicing architecture, but the lure of working with fabric, which she had always collected, drew her in. "I was always fascinated with crazy quilts," says Ford. "They started in the Victorian times with women piecing together anything they could get from their family. These



Kathy Ford, architect turned fiber artist makes "quilts" of exploding color. She demonstrates how sheer silks are sewn onto the top layer giving the work shimmer and dimension.

Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel

were women of means so they used pieces of velvet as well as cotton."

The appeal of these quilts to Ford was that they are "weird, with no discernible pattern and are finished with embroidery stitch." She took this concept and "introduced structure. My first quilts look like ordered crazy quilts with blocks fashioned out of cotton pieced together. They looked something like stained glass windows."

Unlike traditional quilts which typically repeat a pattern in blocks, for her, "working in fabric is about discovering order. As an architect, you are always finding the order. Now, 30 years later, I focus on images taken in nature, especially on my property."

The majority of her work is large and meant to be hung on a wall though early in her career she did create quilts meant to be on a bed. To experience Ford's current work, you need to both step back to take in the whole complex image and the play of light on the various fabric and then come in close to see the layers. She often uses fine, sheer silk as a top layer which gives it a shimmer grounded by the stitching.

Ford came to the Hilltowns only relatively recently, in 2014, but she was familiar with the area as she worked on affordable housing and adaptive reuse of historic buildings for the Hilltown Community Development Corporation. She had been living in a

historic house in Amherst, but the lure of nature appealed. "I got divorced and got a dog. I wanted to embrace my life as a solitary person," she said after her two children left home. "My fingers kept circling the Hilltowns and I did not look back."

Her current work is inspired by nature experiences in the Hilltowns. "My work is composed of random pictures. Something like walking a path between meadow and woods, I find a way to begin a structure. Each work is a new body as I use the ability to move the piece and create it with both hand and machine stitching. It's like an old tree that takes time to grow." Time, indeed, as many of her works can take over six months to create.

Ford's work is widely collected and she has achieved renown well beyond the region. In 2019 she was published in Quilt National, the leading publication of the medium. That honor came with being a part of a biennial show of quilts where her work traveled the country. She has submitted to the current competition and hopes to be included again. In Western Massachusetts, she is shown at the Oxbow Gallery in Easthampton.

In the Hilltowns, she volunteered to be the president of the Hilltown Arts Alliance and has been working with Open Studio Tour organizer, watercolor artist Kathryn Jensen, on this year's program. Twenty-six artists are participating.

This year the tour hub will be in the Worthington Historical Society, a building with soaring windows to highlight the eight artists, who will be showing there. The event is free and open to the public. For full information on the twelve open studios and all the artists participating, people should visit hilltownartsalliance.org/open-studio-tour.

# WORTHINGTON

## Transfer Station returns to winter hours

WORTHINGTON – The Transfer Station hours are changing to winter hours. The new hours are Saturday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Wednesday from noon-4 p.m. The Saturday hours were incorrectly listed in the Thursday, Sept. 5 edition.

## Cultural Council accepts applications for grants

WORTHINGTON – Effective Sept. 1 through Tuesday, Oct. 15, the Worthington Cultural Council is accepting applications from organizations, schools and individuals for grants that support cultural activities in the community in 2025.

Applicants must submit requests online at <http://www.mass-culture.org/Worthington> or by mail at: Worthington Cultural Council, P.O. Box 247, Worthington, MA 01098.

Projects must have an identified local venue or be accessible online and have a projected completion date to be considered. Information and local guidelines can be found by visiting <http://www.mass-culture.org/Worthington>, emailing [worthingtonculturalcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:worthingtonculturalcouncil@gmail.com), or calling Zoë Spring at 917-415-0660.

The Worthington Cultural Council is supported by an annual appropriation from the Massachusetts Cultural

Council, a state agency. The purpose of the local and regional cultural

councils is to support public programs that foster a rich cultural life in communities across the Commonwealth.

Previously funded projects have included storytelling at the Worthington Library, Hilltown

Theater Anonymous and the Sevenars Concert Series. The Cultural Council looks forward to hearing to receiving applications.

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# BECKET

## Athenaeum receives grant

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., serving Becket and Washington, is one of 62 organizations nationwide selected to receive a 2024-2025 NEA Big Read grant.

A grant of \$6,000 will support a community reading program focusing on “The Bear” by Andrew Krivak from September 2024 through May 2025. An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens the understanding of the world, communities, and everyone through the power of a shared reading experience.

“The NEA Big Read brings the transformative experience of reading to an entire community,” said Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD, chair of the National Endowment for the Arts. “This year’s grantees, including The Becket Athenaeum, are taking themes off the page and using creative programming to navigate difficult topics, explore new perspectives and strengthen bonds between neighbors.”

The Becket Athenaeum Big Read, the first-ever community read for the communities of Becket and Washington, will include several exciting programs and events for all ages. Every program is free and open to all. Because the beautiful and mysterious world where “The Bear” takes place can be perceived as a cautionary tale for the planet after the reign of humankind, the theme for The Becket Athenaeum Big Read is environmental awareness.

Starting in September, the library will offer an exciting slate of programs with a focus on sustainability and reconnecting with natural surroundings. The initiative will culminate in May with a

visit from Andrew Krivak, the author of “The Bear.” Copies of The Bear are available for checkout at the Becket Athenaeum and digital copies are available with a library card through Libby.

“One of the most exciting aspects of a community-wide read is the opportunity for the community’s organizations and businesses to bring their unique specialties to neighborly collaborations,” said Nicole Schulze, Executive Director of The Becket Athenaeum. The Becket Athenaeum’s Big Read community partners include the Becket Arts Center, the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee, Becket resident Tarcisio Ramos Dos Santos of the History Channel series “Alone,” the Washington Conservation Commission, the Becket Conservation Commission, local authors Lara Tupper and Elizabeth Heller, local artist Elizabeth Whyte Schulze, and more.

The library will kick off The Becket Athenaeum Big Read on Thursday, Sept. 26 at 6 p.m. at The Becket Athenaeum with a Climate Change Panel featuring Jane Winn - Executive Director of the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Cindy Delpapa – local climate activist and former restoration ecologist, Meredyth Babcock – Outreach Coordinator at Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee and Susan Purser – Coordinator of 350ma- Berkshires. These local leaders in climate organizations will be discussing climate disruption and environmental awareness and will take questions from the audience. To register for the Climate Change Panel, people may visit the library’s website at [www.becketathenaeum.org](http://www.becketathenaeum.org) or email [info@bwlibrary.org](mailto:info@bwlibrary.org).



This is one of the pieces of art, which will be on exhibit Sept. 20 through Oct. 13 at Becket Art Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, Becket. *Courtesy photo*

## Art Center hosts exhibit

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will host an opening reception for the exhibition “Nature Is Wild” in the upper gallery on Friday, Sept. 20 from 5-7 p.m.

The exhibit, which features a variety of styles and media, will close on Sunday,

Oct. 13 with another reception from 2-4 p.m. The Members’ Art Show continues in the lower gallery until Sept. 29. The exhibitions and receptions are open to the public and free, though donations are welcome. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.com](http://becketartscenter.com).

## Becket to hold vaccine clinics

BECKET– Berkshire Public Health Alliance will hold two vaccine clinics in the Becket Town Hall Community Room, 557 Main St.

Vaccine clinic dates are Thursday, Oct. 3 from 10 a.m.-noon and Wednesday, Oct. 16 from 4-6 p.m.

Nurses will do their best to abide

by the registration appointment schedule.

Unregistered clients will be vaccinated as time and supplies allow.

People should wear short sleeves. People may preregister by visiting <https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/berkshire?site=becket-town-hall>.



Liz Queler and Seth Farber will perform on Saturday, Sept. 28 from 5-7 p.m.

*Submitted photo*

## Liz Queler and Seth Farber to perform at Fun Day Sept. 28

BECKET – As part of Becket Parks and Recreation’s Family Fun Day on Saturday, Sept. 28, the Becket Arts Center presents an outdoor concert featuring Seth and Liz.

The concert will take place at Becket Center Town Park from 5-7 p.m. Seth Farber is a jazz musician; Liz Queler is an acoustic singer/songwriter. They each have solo careers

as well as collaborative projects, plus eight Grammy nominations between them.

People should bring lawn chairs, coolers, snacks and children. This event, part of the BAC’s “Music Brings Communities Together” program, is free; donations are welcome. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

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# NORTHAMPTON

## Hampshire County celebrated Good Neighbor Day

NORTHAMPTON – National Good Neighbor Day will be celebrated in Hampshire County with activities including Celebrate-a-Neighbor; Walk and Talk and a Photo Rally Scavenger Hunt.

The Trauma-Informed Hampshire County network is for the first time spearheading events in Hampshire County to mark the decades-old national Good Neighbor Day on Saturday, Sept. 28.

“Loneliness has increased tremendously since the pandemic; The best antidote to loneliness and isolation is connection,” said Ruth Ever, Program Director for Trauma-Informed Hampshire County.

Celebrate-a-Neighbor, an ongoing activity leading up to Saturday, Sept. 28. Everyone is invited to email short descriptions of a way a neighbor helped them or someone else, along with a photo with their neighbor. Submissions will be shared on TIHC’s website and around the county

on printed canvas displays in shop windows and public buildings, thanks to support from Pivot Media. Details to are at TIHC’s website by visiting <https://hampshiretihc.org/events/>.

Walk-and-talk is planned for Saturday, Sept. 28 at 10 a.m. in Grenville Park in Ware, hosted by the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance. The idea is to encourage healthy activity with others, with prompts offered to encourage conversations. People are asked to meet at the park at 10 a.m., no registration is necessary for the walk.

A scavenger hunt will be held on Saturday, Sept. 28 from 2-4 p.m., starting at the Forbes Library lawn, 20 West St, Northampton. Teams of neighbors, families or friends are invited to take part. There will also be games on the lawn, socializing and snacks. Clues will be provided for teams to find and photograph

during the scavenger hunt around town. Tech savvy volunteers will be on hand to help teams upload photos. People may visit the THIC website at <https://hampshiretihc.org/events/> for more information.

Good Neighbor Day was created in the early 1970s. In 1978, then-President Jimmy Carter issued a proclamation, saying: “Understanding, love and respect build cohesive families and communities. The same bonds cement our Nation and the nations of the world...This sense of community is nurtured and expressed in our neighborhoods ...I call upon the people of the United States and interested groups and organizations to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.”

In Massachusetts, Good Neighbor Day is being spearheaded by the Coalition to End Loneliness, of which TIHC is a participating member. Gov. Maura Healey

this month issued a proclamation identifying Sept. 28 as Good Neighbor Day of Action. “The last few years have shown us the value of connection, kindness and community. We are proud to recognize Good Neighbor Day of Action and encourage people across the state to use the day as an opportunity to take a minute to do an act of kindness.”

TIHC is a county-wide network committed to creating a kinder, more trauma-responsive community through training, education, advocacy, and policy change. Hampshire County’s Good Neighbor Day events are supported by the Western Mass Training Consortium, the Northampton Recovery Center, MA Association for Mental Health, Hampshire Franklin Tobacco-Free Community Partnership and the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance.

## Cooley Dickinson raises \$3.6M through Grinspoon Challenge

NORTHAMPTON – Cooley Dickinson Hospital has met a \$1 million challenge from the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation, raising a total of \$3.6 million, which will support the hospital’s \$26 million Emergency Department expansion project.

The announcement was made during a “topping off” ceremony, held in front of the Cooley Dickinson Emergency Department.

“Mr. Grinspoon recognized the significance of the project for our community, so he issued us a challenge last summer: to raise \$2 million within a year, promising to give an additional \$1 million if we succeeded,” said chief development officer Diane Dukette. “Within a year, more than 100 new donors made first-time gifts in response and many others came forward with second or

third gifts to the campaign to assure our success. Our community rallied with remarkable support, which will ultimately help us enhance access to quality emergency care for everyone in the Pioneer Valley.”

Grinspoon was the first person to sign the last beam that was lifted into place Tuesday afternoon as part of the ceremony. Joining the signature of the philanthropist, and his wife Diane Troderman, was Emergency Department campaign honorary chair Thomas O’Brien, along with hundreds of employees and donors who attended the event. Attendees used permanent white marker to sign the steel beam. In the construction industry, a “topping off” ceremony is a long-standing tradition that celebrates the construction team’s efforts, while extending good fortune to future occu-

pants.

Dr. R.F. Conway, chair of the ‘Transforming Emergency Care’ campaign, has been associated with Cooley’s emergency department since 1980, serving as its medical director from 1982-2016 and as its founding chief of emergency medicine in 1984.

“I’ve watched the Emergency Department grow over the past 40 years. We’ve had several renovations and each time we accomplished pieces of our goals,” he said. “But now, we are undergoing a complete renovation that will transform Cooley Dickinson into an ideal setting for emergency medicine, providing us with the ability to better meet the needs of our community.”

Since Sept. 1, 2023, more than \$2.6 million in gifts have been raised toward the challenge one of three that have been met since the start of fundraising. A “Million Dollar Community Challenge,” a collaboration involving four local cou-

ples and a local business, was held in fall of 2021. And a “bankESB \$500,000 Challenge” took place in fall 2022.

To date, nearly \$11 million has been raised in support of the ‘Transforming Emergency Care: The Campaign for the Cooley Dickinson Hospital Emergency Department’ fundraising initiative. Other significant donors have included Amherst College, Smith College, Williston Northampton School, Florence Bank, Freedom Credit union, Greenfield Savings Bank, Greenfield-Northampton Co-operative Bank, Peoples Bank, All States Materials Group, Beveridge Family Foundation and The Friends of Cooley Dickinson.

All gifts made to the ‘Transforming Emergency Care’ campaign remain local. Individuals or organizations who would like to support and learn more about the campaign can visit [cooleydickinson.org/EDcampaign](http://cooleydickinson.org/EDcampaign) or call 413-582-GIVE (4483).

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**or email\* them to: [jamie@turley.com](mailto:jamie@turley.com)**  
**\*Be sure to indicate “Dazzler” in the subject line of your email.**

**Deadline for Calendar submissions is October 14.**

## OTIS

### Otis Library to hold story walk

OTIS – The Otis Library story walk is “Different” by Heather Avis and illustrated by Sarah Mensinga.

This rhyming book encourages children to value the “different” in all people, leading the way to a kinder world in which the differences in all of us are

celebrated and embraced. Macy is a girl who’s a lot like you and me, but she’s also quite different.

This book will be featured in the story walk throughout the month of September behind St. Mary’s of the Lake, 48 North Main St.

### Council on Aging lists events

OTIS – The Otis Council on Aging announces the Senior’s Room located in Town Hall, One North Main Road, is open every Monday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Exercise class is held every Monday at 10:30 a.m. in the gym at Town Hall. The Food Pantry is open every Wednesday from 9-11 a.m.

Grief counseling will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 1:30 p.m. Out to lunch will take place Thursday, Oct. 3 at noon in the East Restaurant, 305 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington.

Hair cuts by Linda will take place on Monday, Oct. 7. People should call the Council on Aging at 413-269-0100, extension 5 to make an appointment. Walk ins are welcome.

Foot Care appointments on Wednesday, Oct. 9 are filled, People should call if they are unable to make it. There is a waiting list for appointments.

The COA will be closed on Mondays, Oct. 14 Columbus Day and Nov. 11 Veterans Day.

A pot luck will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 16 at 1 p.m. People should bring Halloween dishes and wear costumes. Berkshire Birds will offer a program at 1 p.m. Brown Bag lunch will be held Friday, Oct. 18 from 10-11 a.m.

The CHP Wellness van will be at town Hall on Thursday, Oct. 17 from 10 a.m.-noon. Flu shots will be available. A flu and COVID vaccine clinic will be held Tuesday, Nov. 5 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

### Town announces tax bills due Nov. 1

OTIS – Real Estate tax bill are being issued Oct. 1.

The Collector’s office will be closed the following dates: Monday, Oct. 7 vacation, Monday, Oct. 14 Columbus

Day holiday and Monday, Oct. 21 to Thursday, Oct. 24 vacation. Tax bills are due Friday, Nov. 1. Residents may drop their payment in the drop box at the main entrance or pay in person.



## GOSHEN

# Re-imagine Goshen Center launches capital campaign

GOSHEN – The Open Space Committee announces their inaugural capital campaign.

Many have asked about the status of the town of Goshen's Re-imagine Goshen Center project, which includes renovating Memorial Park. New elements in the park will include stone walls and a patio constructed of Goshen indigenous stone, café tables, park benches, native plantings, pollinator gardens, a brick walkway, refurbished memorials and a wrought iron archway at the park entrance.

To date, they have cut down the trees along the perimeter of the tennis court, removed the tennis court fencing and asphalt, pruned the trees in Memorial Park and installed a project billboard. The next steps include installing a privacy fence for Highland Village Circle residents and cutting down the silver maple in Memorial Park.

The goal of this project is to create

a community hub in the town center that provides a gathering place that welcomes people of all ages and abilities, promotes community pride and encourages recreational, cultural and social activities. The intention is to invite a sense of place, pride, social cohesion and community engagement. Their hope is that it will enhance Goshen's Main Street corridor, thereby stimulating economic activity.

Since April of this year, the Open Space Committee has held several fundraising events: a spaghetti dinner and raffle, a tag sale on Memorial Day weekend in collaboration with the Williams-Boltwood House Project and the Bottle Redemption Program with volunteers collecting redeemable bottles and cans at the Goshen Transfer Station.

Upcoming fundraisers include the quilt raffle Saturday, Sept. 14 to Sunday, Dec. 8 ticket sales at local venues and craft shows, and on the town website, a pizza party on Saturday, Oct. 5 and the

very popular Bingo on Sunday, Nov. 10, both at the Goshen Town Hall.

Community support is a big part of the Re-imagine Goshen Center project. With support from community members and businesses, Community Preservation Act funding and pending \$50,000 in Community Project Funding from the state legislature, thanks to the efforts of Senator Paul Mark and Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, the project has 70% of budgeted funding.

The goal this year is \$20,000. To make a tax-deductible donation to the Re-imagine Goshen Center project, people may visit their website at [www.Goshen-ma.us/departments/open-space-committee](http://www.Goshen-ma.us/departments/open-space-committee) or mail a check to: Town of Goshen, Open Space Committee, 40 Main St., Goshen, MA 01032. They should make their check payable to: Town of Goshen and memo to Re-imagine Goshen. Sponsorships are available for a range of items listed on

the webpage Sponsorship List.

With help, the community can re-imagine a new, creative, beautiful vibrant and inclusive town center that benefits every member of the community. The Open Space Committee extends its gratitude to all their sponsors, donors and volunteers, who have supported this exciting project. For questions, comments or to volunteer, people may email [reimagineshoshen01032@gmail.com](mailto:reimagineshoshen01032@gmail.com).



Peter LaFogg of LaFogg & Hathaway Construction in Williamsburg, removes the tennis court asphalt in Goshen center.



Michael Fairchild of Brattleboro, Vermont installs the billboard in Goshen Center. Submitted photos



Bob Goss, former Goshen Tree Warden, prunes the maple tree in Memorial Park.

## SCHOOLS & YOUTH

### R.H. Conwell students walk to school Sept. 20

WORTHINGTON – R. H. Conwell Elementary School, 160 Huntington Road, will walk to school on Friday, Sept. 20 at 8:30 a.m. Buses will be dropping students off at the Worthington Golf Club that morning at 8:30 a.m.. Staff will be there to greet students and walk down Ridge Road to school together. Caregivers that drive their student(s) to school should plan to drop off their student(s) at the Golf Club at 8:30 a.m. On the day of, walk to school, they should drive up Buffington Road and down Ridge Rd to the golf course to park there. Families are welcome and encouraged to join in the walk as well.

### Colleges and universities announce Dean's list

#### DEAN'S LIST Hartwick College Oneonta, New York

Maya Lieberman-Bachman of Huntington, an art major

#### Holyoke Community College Holyoke

Jacob Michael White of Chesterfield

Brenda Lee Carrier of Easthampton, Christian Alberto Castro of Easthampton, Laura Gilbert of Easthampton, Cadence Hiller of Easthampton, Stien Nangoi Kusuma of Easthampton, Isabelle Cate Perusse of Easthampton and Danielle C. Plasse of Easthampton

Benjamin Max Gottlieb of Florence, Tasia Lynn Sanderson of Florence,

Ephraim Sieber of Florence and Eric Kendall Welch Jr. of Florence

Chelsea O'Brien of Huntington

Staci Alice Barrett of Lee

Liam McKellick of Montgomery

Maxwell Townsend of Northampton and Brie-Ann Michelle Wilber of Northampton

Amber Lynn Pensivy of Peru

Spencer Richard Czarniecki of Southamton, Alaina Grace Pellegrini of Southamton and Stephanie Noelle Sawyer. of Southamton

Taryn Kacie Black I of Westfield, Corrin Olivia Brockney, of Westfield, Luz C. Caballero of Westfield, Sorangely Candelario of Westfield, Jenna Marie Cardin of Westfield, Jeffrey Michael Collingwood of Westfield, Katherine Theresa Dengler of Westfield,

Christina Manuela Gelmudinov of Westfield, Amanda Marie Janisieski of Westfield, Fathima Lafeer of Westfield, Ryan Alan Paro of Westfield, Jessica Lauren Starkey of Westfield and Aimee Elizabeth Williams of Westfield

Mickayla Sloan Servello of Worthington

#### University of Delaware Newark, Delaware

Julia Romanellie of Westfield

#### STUDENT HONORS LIST Community College of Vermont Summer 2024

#### Student Honors List

Montpelier, Vermont

Alexandra Tinari of Plainfield

### High schools can apply to receive grant to host a financial education fair

BOSTON – The State Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment, in partnership with the Massachusetts Division of Banks and the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, announces funding for the 2025 Financial Education Innovation Fund Grant.

Created in 2015, the Financial Education Innovation Fund provides students with the opportunity to experience real-world financial simulations without the real-world consequences. Credit for Life Fairs include interactive workshops that offer a fun and unique opportunity for students to learn about personal finance. These fairs often serve as a supplement or capstone to financial education classes and engage students

in real-world saving, spending and budgeting simulations. Student participants either choose or are assigned an occupation and make a variety of financial decisions, ranging from where to live and how to save for retirement to buying a television or owning a pet.

Massachusetts public or charter high schools and special education programs approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are eligible to apply. Applicants looking to start a new program can receive up to \$6,400 and those enhancing or expanding an existing fair can receive up to \$3,200.

Schools that have over 50% of a student population considered low-to-moderate income, as designated by DESE,

can apply for additional funding of \$500.

Applications are open until Friday, Oct. 25. Schools can learn more and apply by visiting [mass.gov/CreditForLife](http://mass.gov/CreditForLife)

Since 2015, over 40,000 Massachusetts students have attended Credit for Life Fairs. The Financial Education Innovation Fund Grant was established as an ongoing effort to strengthen access to financial literacy throughout Massachusetts. This financial education program is funded by the Division of Banks through a settlement over alleged unlawful lending practices.

The Division of Banks is the chartering authority and primary regulator for financial service providers in Massachusetts. DOB's primary mission is to ensure a sound, competitive, and

accessible financial services environment throughout the Commonwealth.

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation protects and empowers consumers through advocacy and education and ensures a fair playing field for the Massachusetts businesses its agencies regulate.

Treasurer Goldberg created the Office of Economic Empowerment, led by a deputy treasurer, with the deliberate goal of implementing a range of economic empowerment initiatives that include closing the race and gender wage gap, addressing racial equity, increasing access to financial education, and creating pathways to economically stable futures for all residents across the state.



## RUSSELL

# Noble View to dedicate 'All Persons Trail' Sept. 28

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

RUSSELL – The Appalachian Mountain Club's Noble View Outdoor Center, 635 South Quarter Road, announces the grand opening of their new "All Persons Trail" on Saturday, Sept. 28 at 10 a.m.

All are welcome to this event, which will be followed by an "All for Fall" celebration with snacks, music, a magician, games and activities for children and adults, including a paddle on Russell Pond at the nearby Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation at 2 p.m. Attendees should feel welcome to bring a picnic lunch.

The All Persons Trail is a 0.6 mile trail designed to address the needs of any hiker, including those who use wheel-

chairs, walkers or strollers to access. It was built in accordance with Forest Service Accessible Trail Guidelines. The All Persons Trail has a permanent Story walk, which is a collaboration of the Hilltown Family Center, a program of the Hilltown Community Health Centers and the Noble View Stewards Council. It was generously funded by the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

The day's celebration will begin with a welcome and speeches at 10 a.m. A ribbon cutting and walking the trail will take place at 10:30 a.m.. The All for Fall celebration will start at noon.

Noble View Adopt-a-Trail volunteers are preparing the trail for this special grand opening; these volunteers help maintain all 12 miles of hiking trails at

Noble View. The All Persons Trail was built by the AMC Pro Trail Crews over the summers of 2023 and 2024. Each crew consists of five to six members and provides a full suite of professional trail services for public land managers to build, repair, and maintain non-motorized recreational trails across the northeast.

AMC Mountain Club Director of Trails and Recreation Management Alex De Lucia applied for a Mass Trails Grant to build this trail. It also had local support from the Noble View Stewards Council, AMC WMA Chapter members, All Out Adventures, the Springfield Water & Sewer Commission, and dedicated AMC Donors. The Noble View Stewards Council helped the AMC get local Conservation Commission permits.

Noble View sits at 1,100 feet elevation above the Connecticut Valley,

offering amazing views of the region that extend as far as Springfield. The property contains 360 acres of woodlands, trails and fields and is open year round for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Cottages with electricity and lighting can accommodate overnight guests. While there are no sinks or running water in the cottages, potable water is available at the bath house, which is accessible and offers hot showers, sinks, flush composting toilets and dish washing stations. North and Double Cottages both have ramps and accessible bedrooms.

Paddling at Russell Pond through the Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation is offered via ongoing collaboration between Noble View and the Western Massachusetts Scouting Council. Pre-registration is required and can be done on the AMC website.

## WASHINGTON

# BEAT offers certification

WASHINGTON – Berkshire Environmental Action Team offers a one-day track and sign certification led by Daniel Hansche, an evaluator with Tracker Certification North America and the founder of Spur Wander, on Wednesday, Oct. 30, at the Washington Marsh in October Mountain State Forest.

Participants will learn how to recognize tracks of mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates on their landscape and interpret animal movement and behavior. This explorative practice reveals a hidden world of wildlife sign and develops the ability to find subtle evidence of animal presence. In short, this skill set facilitates knowledge on a remarkable variety of life in an ecosystem.

Tracker Certification North America educates trackers of all skill levels and, through the CyberTracker Conservation Certification process, ensures reliable observations from professionals

and community scientists alike. Using these skills to measure landscape health, CyberTracker Conservation's mission is to create a worldwide environmental monitoring network.

This one-day evaluation offered by BEAT will provide an excellent springboard to practice and apply fundamental tracking skills. It will also give participants an opportunity to get certified as a Level 1 Tracker with TCNA. Space is limited and registration is required. There is also a limited amount of financial aid available.

People may visit [www.thebeatnews.org/BeatTeam/event/one-day-track-sign-cybertracker-evaluation/](http://www.thebeatnews.org/BeatTeam/event/one-day-track-sign-cybertracker-evaluation/).

This educational program is offered by Berkshire Environmental Action Team, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Pittsfield. To learn more about BEAT's programs and what they do, people may visit [www.thebeatnews.org](http://www.thebeatnews.org).

## LENOX

# Community Access Arts poetry reading on Oct. 1

LENOX – Community Access To Arts celebrates writers with disabilities on Tuesday, Oct. 1 at 5-6 p.m. in a free and intimate reading at The Stable at the Mount, Edith Wharton's Home, 2 Plunkett St.

Attendees will hear heartfelt, thought-provoking and humorous work by CATA writers with disabilities read by a wonderful cast of guest readers. Through poetry, short stories and more, CATA writers with disabilities express their unique perspectives and reveal common experiences that connect everyone.

After the reading, there will be a

free reception from 6-7 p.m. Space is limited. Reservations are required by calling 413-528-5485.

American Sign Language interpretation will be provided during the reading. The Stable's performance space and restrooms are wheelchair accessible. Free accessible parking is available a short distance from the Stable along a light gravel path. Sensory-friendly tools will be available, including fidget devices and noise cancelling headphones.

CATA's reading at The Mount is sponsored in part by Berkshire Magazine, Massachusetts Cultural Council and generous supporters.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

## WESTHAMPTON

# Westhampton Public Library announces upcoming events

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Public Library, 11 North Road, closed Monday, Oct. 14 and Monday, Oct. 21

By vote of the Library Trustees the library is closed the day after the Fall Festival.

Library hours Monday and Thursday from 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. To place a request for curbside pickup, people may email [westhampton@cwmar.org](mailto:westhampton@cwmar.org) or call 413-527-5386.

Ongoing programs include: COA Computer Class with Bob Miller the second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m., Scrabble Group Tuesdays at 2 p.m., Book Group fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m., walk-in wellness clinics with Westhampton's public health nurse first and third Wednesdays at 10-11:30 a.m. and coffee and chat Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

CFCE Playgroup meets Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Story time Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. and After School Fun Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. There will be a fun activity every Thursday this month after school.

LEGO Club first Thursday; Craft Club second Thursday; Nintendo Switch Happy Hour third Thursday; Comics Club, fourth Thursday and Board Games fifth Thursday. Children may stop in anytime during library hours, check out a



book and get a Halloween treat bag at the library. Costumes are encouraged and treats are non-candy.

Teen Craft Night will be held third Thursdays at 6 p.m. This month craft night will be held Oct 17.

This month's craft is a hand-carved rubber stamp. Materials are limited to eight participants and registration is required. People should register by emailing Emily at [ewayne@cwmar.org](mailto:ewayne@cwmar.org). Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring all teen crafts.

Tom Martin will present "Lift" with an opening reception on Thursday, Oct. 10 from 5-6:30 p.m.

This group of drawings sits somewhere between a two paged picture book, a glass free shadowbox and formally framed ink drawings. Viewers are invited to "lift the tab" on an outer drawing to look at another drawing underneath. The work is meant to be tactile and minimally interactive.

Artist Sally Lawton will have an exhibit of small works on paper and ceramics in the glass display cabinet.

17th Annual Westhampton Fall

Festival will be held on Sunday, Oct. 20 from noon-4 p.m. at

Westhampton Town Center. There will be great food and fun. An interfaith church service will be held at 10 a.m.

Events include 5K road race, steeple tours with valley views, axe throwing and lumberjack demo, blacksmith demo, history museum, corn husking, cider making, fiber spinning, live fiddle music, sledge hammer throw, skillet toss, Brightspot Therapy dogs, cow pie Bingo, firefighter's brigade, Potato Cannons, lawn games, children's games and Crafts and much more.

There will be Intergenerational Pumpkin Carving Workshop with Jo Martin on Thursday, Oct. 24 from 6-8 p.m. People should email [westhampton@cwmar.org](mailto:westhampton@cwmar.org) or call 413-527-5386 to register.

This workshop is for all ages and is limited to ten participants. Children must be supervised at all times by a responsible parent or guardian as sharp tools will be used.

People should bring on pumpkin of any size and two additional small pumpkins or gourds, optional.

They should bring any tools they will want to use including loop tools, scrapers, etc. People can get tools from Amazon and the instructor will have some to share too. A big thank-you to Jo for volunteering her time and creative skills.



# WESTFIELD

## 104th Fighter Wing to conduct increased night flying

BARNES AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTFIELD – The 104th Fighter Wing will be conducting night flying due to operational requirements now through Friday, Sept. 20.

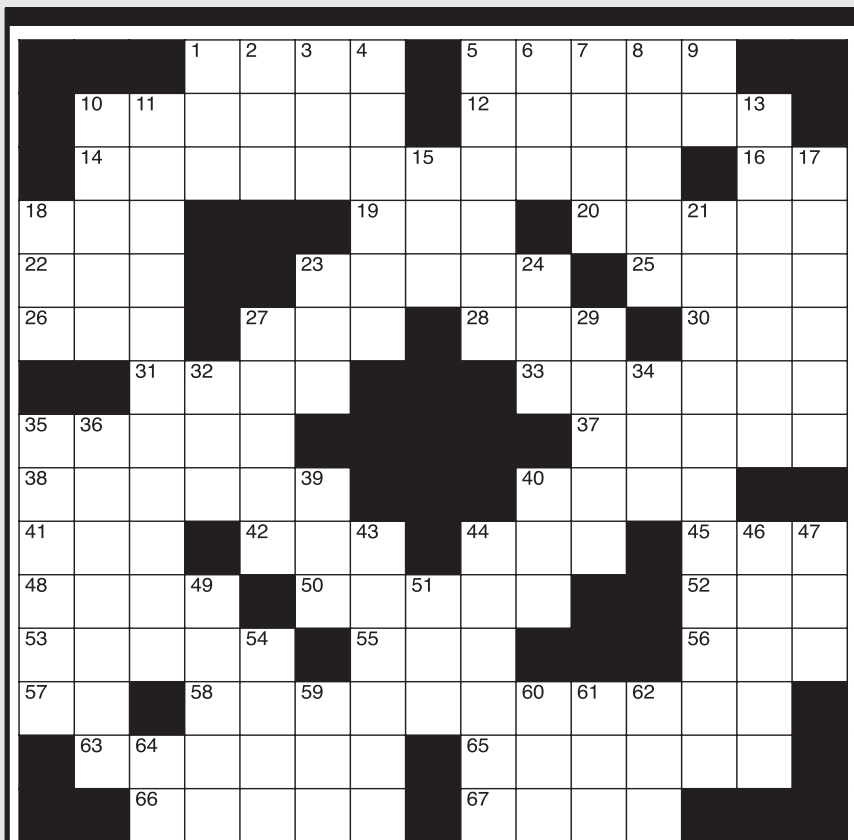
There are no plans to change nor-

mal flight training at this time. The 104th Fighter Wing is made up of highly trained personnel ready to provide Air Superiority on-demand anywhere in the world with 21 assigned F-15C Eagle Aircraft.

The 104th is trained to provide 24/7

Aerospace Control Alert, providing armed F-15 fighters ready to scramble in a moment's notice to protect the northeast United States from any airborne threat, security for one-quarter of the nation's population and over one-third of the Gross

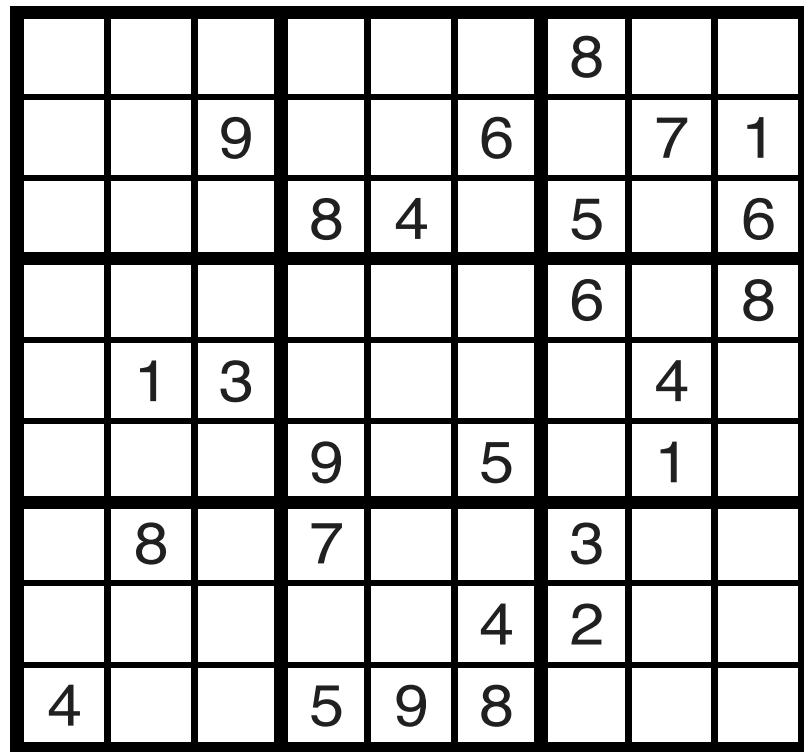
Domestic Product. The Wing is always on call for emergency response to include security, logistics, communications, explosive ordnance disposal, firefighting and medical support to the nation and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Wrest
  - 5. Russian river
  - 10. Grupo Montparnasse founder
  - 12. One who quits prematurely
  - 14. Related to the nature of being
  - 16. Early multimedia
  - 18. Indigenous Tibetan religion
  - 19. Tease
  - 20. J.M. \_\_, Irish dramatist
  - 22. Pounds per square inch
  - 23. Surrendered
  - 25. Notable Dallas Cowboy Leon
  - 26. Dash
  - 27. Man who behaves dishonorably
  - 28. British Air Aces
  - 30. Data executive
  - 31. Spiritual leader
  - 33. Flower cluster
  - 35. Of the cheek
  - 37. Tears down
  - 38. Uncoordinated
  - 40. Touches lightly
  - 41. Soak
  - 42. Founder of Babism
  - 44. Not good
  - 45. Inches per minute (abbr.)
  - 48. Type of casino game
  - 50. Skills assessments for adults
  - 52. Check
  - 53. Gives a job
  - 55. Fifth note of a major scale
  - 56. Small, faint constellation
  - 57. Thou
  - 58. Reduce
  - 63. Another recording
  - 65. Removes for good
  - 66. Jill and Catherine
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Greenwich Time
  - 2. Metropolis
  - 3. Complete
  - 4. Scheduled
  - 5. One who obeys
  - 6. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects
  - 7. Days (Spanish)
  - 8. Unsaturated hydrocarbon radical
  - 9. Region of the U.S. (abbr.)
  - 10. Tributary of the Alabama River
  - 11. One who eliminates
  - 13. Ballroom music
  - 15. Officer in the Book of Mormon
  - 17. Denies
  - 18. Barrels per day (abbr.)
  - 21. Make vital
  - 23. Former NFLer Newton
  - 24. Kashmiri tribe
  - 27. Indigenous S. American person
  - 29. Capacitance unit
  - 32. MLB great Scherzer
  - 34. Taxi
  - 35. Boggy
  - 36. Artist's workroom
  - 39. Feline
  - 40. Prosecutors
  - 43. Freshwater perches
  - 44. Young ladies
  - 46. Whittles
  - 47. Licensed for Wall Street
  - 49. Type of gene
  - 51. Express displeasure
  - 54. Fly high
  - 59. Norwegian krone
  - 60. Investment account
  - 61. Chinese surname
  - 62. Language
  - 64. By the way (abbr.)

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

- ARIES**  
Mar 21/Apr 20  
You might find it challenging to assess a situation this week. Always stick to what your instincts are telling you as they are rarely wrong. Try not to get sidetracked by small details.
- CANCER**  
Jun 22/Jul 22  
Consider new habits that promote well-being and balance. It is important to focus on your health and tailor routines to that end. Find time to reflect on your goals.
- LEO**  
Jul 23/Aug 23  
It's a great time to express yourself through art, hobbies, or social activities. Romance also could be in the cards, so make space for some fun and connection in your personal life.
- TAURUS**  
Apr 21/May 21  
You may find a need to be more assertive at work, Taurus. Your ideas are sound, so don't hesitate to share them with colleagues. Others will appreciate your insight.
- GEMINI**  
May 22/Jun 21  
Communication may be the key for you this week, Gemini. It is an excellent time to network and share your ideas. Be concise in your interactions to avoid misunderstandings.
- LIBRA**  
Sept 23/Oct 23  
Social interactions are bound to be lively and stimulating. It can be easy to get carried away, so balance your social life with some quiet time to recharge.
- SCORPIO**  
Oct 24/Nov 22  
Financial matters might be in focus. Make a plan to review your budget and figure out how to save more. You may want to consider new investments.
- SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov 23/Dec 21  
You might experience a boost in energy and optimism this week, Sagittarius. It's always a good idea to focus on personal goals and any ambitions that you might have.
- CAPRICORN**  
Dec 22/Jan 20  
Capricorn, an exercise in reflection and introspection might be a good idea this week. It is time for some personal growth, including figuring out ways to be more receptive to feedback.
- AQUARIUS**  
Jan 21/Feb 18  
Your innovative ideas may receive some positive attention, so don't be afraid to share with others. Social interactions rev up, but be sure to balance social life with downtime.
- PISCES**  
Feb 19/Mar 20  
Reassess your professional aspirations and take practical steps toward achieving them this week. Put out some feelers to your employment network.



## SUDOKU

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

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**answers**

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MONDAY AT NOON

## FOR SALE

### TAG SALE

**FRI., 9/20 & SAT., 9/21** from 7am-2pm. **115 Wedgwood Drive, Ludlow.** Some furniture, women's clothes, household items. Rain/shine.

**MULTI-FAMILY TAG SALE. 9/28 and 9/29. 101 and 102 Jim Ash Rd., Palmer.** 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. FIRM.

## WANTED

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**GREG LAFOUNTAIN PLUMBING & HEATING** Lic #19196 Repairs & Replacement of fixtures, water heater installations, steam/HW boiler replacement. Kitchen & Bath remodeling. 30 years experience. Fully insured. \$10 Gift Card With Work Performed. Call Greg **(413)592-1505**

## ROOFING

**JENKINS ROOFING** specializing in residential roofs & repairs, chimney repairs. Hampden, MA - **413-566-5596/413-433-5073.** Lic. #105950CSL. Fully insured.

## RUBBISH REMOVAL

**BOB ROBILLARD'S RUBBISH REMOVAL** Attics, Cellars, Garages cleaned, Pools/Hot Tubs Removed. Family owned/operated since 1950 **(413)537-5090**

## TREE WORK

**AAA-TROM'S TREE SERVICE. PROFESSIONAL SERVICE. Residential removal of trees.** Free estimates, Fully insured W/Workman's Comp. Remove them before the wind takes them down. Cordwood, stump grinding. Call **413-283-6374.**

**AFFORDABLE STUMP GRINDING** Fast, dependable service. Free estimates. Fully insured. Call Joe Sablack **413-436-9821, Cell 413-537-7994**

**DL & G TREE SERVICE.** Everything from tree pruning, tree removal, stump grinding, storm damage and brush chipping. Honest and Dependable. Fully insured. Now offering a Senior Citizen and Veteran discount. Call today for free estimate **(413)478-4212**

## STUMP GRINDING

**DL & G STUMP GRINDING** Grinding stumps of all sizes, insured & certified. Senior discounts. Call Dave **413-478-4212**

## AUTO

**CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS**  
FREE TOWING  
FAST SERVICE  
CASH PAID AS IS  
CALL OR TEXT  
**413-219-6839**

## HELP WANTED

**77-YEAR-OLD WITH 2 piles of aged oak,** Cub Cadet splitter, in need of laborer to split. Call Skip, **413-320-7623., South Hadley.**

**HELP WANTED: PART-TIME PODIATRY OFFICE,** Portuguese speaking helpful. Ludlow, Mass. email resume to **podbill@aol.com.**

Ludlow Public School District **CUSTODIAL SUBSTITUTES** on-call Monday thru Friday, 3pm-7pm. Submit resume and letter of intent to **www.schoolspring.com.**

**OAKHAM'S HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT** is hiring part-time seasonal plow drivers. Class B CDL preferred. \$21/hr, over time after 8 hrs in a day. Contact Highway Superintendent, Harold Black at **508-882-5556.**

# FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069  
or call: 413-283-8393

DEADLINES: MONDAY AT NOON

| CATEGORY: |    |    |    |
|-----------|----|----|----|
| 1         | 2  | 3  | 4  |
| 5         | 6  | 7  | 8  |
| 9         | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13        | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17        | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21        | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25        | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29        | 30 | 31 | 32 |
| 33        | 34 | 35 | 36 |
| 37        | 38 | 39 | 40 |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Weeks: \_\_\_\_\_ X per week rate = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card:  MasterCard  VISA  Discover  Cash  Check# \_\_\_\_\_  
Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount of charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Quabbin Village Hills**  
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Circulation: 9,800

**Suburban Residential**  
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# Classifieds

12 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS | SERVING 50 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

## HELP WANTED

**PART-TIME SNOW PLOW DRIVERS NEEDED** for the Town of New Braintree for the 2024-2025 season. Positions available for both CDL and non-CDL license. If you are interested, please contact Highway Superintendent Richard Ayer at **(508) 867-2451** or email [hwyssecretary@newbraintree.org](mailto:hwyssecretary@newbraintree.org).

The Town of Oakham is seeking a qualified, experienced candidate to fill the **part-time position of TOWN CLERK**. The Town Clerk is the chief election officer for the town and the clerk of Town Meetings. For a full job description visit [www.oakham-ma.gov/clerks-office](http://www.oakham-ma.gov/clerks-office). Salary negotiable based on experience.



Post your job openings in our classifieds.

**We get results!**  
Call 413-283-8393

## HELP WANTED

### TOWN OF WORTHINGTON HIGHWAY POSITION OPENING

The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest from qualified candidates to fill two full-time **Equipment Operator/General Laborer** positions in the Town Highway Department. Valid MA CDL operator, Hydraulic Hoister's licenses and OSHA-10 certification is preferred.

Further information can be found on the Town's website: [www.worthington-ma.us](http://www.worthington-ma.us) Questions will be answered by the Highway Superintendent at 64 Huntington Road, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 3 PM; the telephone number is 413-238-5830.

Send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: [worthingtonhighway@gmail.com](mailto:worthingtonhighway@gmail.com) or to Worthington Highway Department, P. O. Box 643, Worthington, MA. This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.

The Town of Worthington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## REAL ESTATE

### FOR RENT



### EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

**ALL REAL ESTATE** advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

**QUIET 1 BEDROOM IN LUDLOW**, first floor, efficiency kitchen. \$925. Near Mass Pike. Parking, on-site laundry, no smoking, no pets. **413-543-3062**.

Find archives of this local newspaper at [www.newspapers.turley.com](http://www.newspapers.turley.com)

## ELECTRIC BILLS

from page 5

The more you use the more you pay and this July was almost two degrees warmer than average."

"Starting August 1, our customers actually began experiencing a rate decrease in their supply charge compared to July's rates, and there had only been one smaller increase to any component of rates between February and July (~3% on the delivery side of the bill). But again, if customers are using more energy, that's ultimately still going to drive their bills up," Ress said.

It was clear to me from the comments on social media, talking to the solar reps and Eversource that before you start any solar investigation, you need to read your bill very closely. I have been paying electric bills for decades from both National Grid and Eversource and admit that I have never gotten into the very important weeds. The information is all there, you just need to read the fine print.

The most important part of the bill to notice is the difference between supply and delivery. Supply is what you are paying for the actual power and delivery is what it takes to get it here, plus maintain the lines. As Eversource's Ress said: "the delivery charge of an electric bill includes the costs of building, maintaining and operating the system that delivers reliable service to your home, as well as state and federally mandated charges for financial assistance, energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. Delivery charges are often broken down into several categories, including: Transmission, Distribution, Operations and Service, Public Policy."

As Marc Ferrante, the rep I met with a solar company said, "Climate change is having a huge impact on the delivery numbers and will likely increase them perpetually. We have a grid that dates to Thomas Edison in the 1880s and we are continually seeing poles and transformers down during high wind and storm events."

It made me think of that magical and scary storm we got in late March that turned the landscape into a frozen kingdom and the time this August when Rte 20 was closed for almost a day. Maintaining old poles and equipment in a rural area is super difficult. Compare this to an urban setting where much of it is underground, protected from the elements.

That delivery charge also relates to the fact that Massachusetts just doesn't make much energy anymore. "After 9/11 people got anxious about nuclear power and our two plants were shut down," says Ferrante. Now, our supply is coming from places you might not expect. If you look at your bill, you will see which yours comes

from. Mine is from Dynegy in Irving, Texas.

In Massachusetts, this lack of local production leads to us having the fourth highest rates in the country according to the U.S. Energy Information Agency. The cost per kilowatt hour in 2024 is \$28.34 on average, which is actually down almost 11% from the prior year.

Says Ress: "New England states historically have higher energy prices for various reasons including our geography and climate, location relative to supply lines, and a heavy reliance on natural gas for both electricity and heating, which impacts winter prices when natural gas supply is constrained."

"The energy supply rate is the largest and most volatile component of rates and currently accounts for about 45% of a customer's total bill," says Ress. "As a reminder, with the deregulation of the utility industry in New England, companies like Eversource do not generate power or produce energy supply. The energy supply price changes twice each year and represents the cost that Eversource pays generators for the power that customers use. Eversource only charges customers what it pays generators for producing the power – it does not earn a profit on the cost of electricity."

We are pretty stuck with high supply rates, but what are those other charges seemingly sneaking onto your bill? If you read the back column of what goes into delivery charges, you see ones for renewable energy, energy efficiency and the electric vehicle program. These added up to an additional \$31 on my bill. But wait, I don't own an electric vehicle, why am I paying for it?

This fee was just added this summer, and was authorized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities in December 2022, as a way to encourage the building of more electric vehicle charging stations. Eversource, National Grid and Unil committed to spend a combined \$400 million on charging infrastructure and their customers are paying for it.

Is it fair for us all to pay, especially if you have no intention of getting an electric vehicle? The state says the only way to meet its carbon goals is to get more people to switch to EVs and to do that, the state needs to build more chargers and make it easier to charge your car at home.

After my discussions with Eversource and that deep dive into my bill, I was convinced that solar was my best option for ever-increasing electric bills. In the next column, I will cover best practices in choosing a provider and system with interviews with Hilltowners who have gone solar.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Probate and Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD24P1889EA  
Estate of:  
Donald Blier  
Date of Death: 05/22/2024  
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by **Brendan Blier of Plainville, CT** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Brendan Blier of Plainville, CT** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 10/03/2024**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS INFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)**  
A Personal Represent-

tative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: September 06, 2024  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**, Register of Probate  
09/19/2024

### TOWN OF CHESTER MASSACHUSETTS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**Notice of Public Hearing**  
Pursuant to Mass General Laws, Chapter 131, Section 40, Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Chester Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Monday, September 30, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.**, in the Town of Chester's Town Hall Auditorium Room on the first floor, on Notice of Intent submittal # 1767311 filed by Vanna Maffuccio and Representative, Pete Westover of Conservation Works L.L.C., on behalf of Chester Elementary School for proposed trail improvements/alterations along the Riverfront Area in a Rare Species Habitat. The application is on file and is available for public inspection. To review please contact the Chester Conservation Commission Office Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.  
09/19/2024

### Town of Huntington Invitation for Bid Replacement of Windows at Town Library

The Town of Huntington seeks sealed bids from qualified contractors for the replacement of windows at

the town library. The complete invitation for bid package is available by emailing [admin@huntingtonma.us](mailto:admin@huntingtonma.us) or at the Selectboard/Town Administrator Office located at Huntington Town Hall, 24 Russell Road in Huntington by appointment. Sealed bids must be submitted by **Thursday, October 17, 2024 by 2:00 p.m.** by mail to Town of Huntington Selectboard, PO Box 430, Huntington, MA 01050; or delivered to the Selectboard/Town Administrator office. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids if it is deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Huntington Selectboard will be the contracting authority.  
09/19/2024



## Send Us Your Photos!

[countryjournal@turley.com](mailto:countryjournal@turley.com)

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

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

## PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to [notices@turley.com](mailto:notices@turley.com)
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

*Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.*

[visit www.publicnotices.turley.com](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)



# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

## Hilltown Hikers explore Clarksburg State Park

The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers explored on the shoreline trail and paddling with views of the Hoosac Range and the Green Mountains in Clarksburg State Park until late in the day.

Mauserts Pond is a shallow, 45 acre man-made pond with a legend has been passed down through the generations.

Before the pond this was once 52 acres of meadow that early settlers used for farming. Legend has it the settlers, to have a diversion from their routine and mundane lives, created a carnival atmosphere in the meadow featuring horse racing. This “sinful” pastime shocked the faithful folks in town. Having

enough influence, the crusaders forced the venture to end by damming the brook and flooding the area so that it would not happen again.

This pond has great parking and a kayak dock at the Nature Center/Beach day use area. The shoreline trail is a short nature trail that highlights the best of the

pond and the beautiful, untouched forest in this Hilltown. The Shoreline Trail (half mile) and a few other smaller spur trails start at the campground area and connect to the kayak launch area at Clarksburg State Park. The trail along Mauserts Pond has a hemlock forest and is exceptionally beautiful.



Frenchie the Bulldog wades in Mauserts Pond on a recent hike with the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers to Clarksburg State Park.



The pond was calm and perfect for paddling.



This pond was once a meadow and was made into a man made pond.



Hilltown Hikers have been spending several weekends paddling around rather than hiking on a trail.



The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers explore an island at Clarksburg State Park.

Submitted photos