

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

October 15, 2026 | Vol. 48, No. 25 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

BLANDFORD

Blandford gets new town sign

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Police Chief Jen Dubiel's annual review was presented to the board.

Language included "We support Chief Dubiel's continued service and sincerely appreciate her dedication to the residents of both Chester and Blandford. We are grateful for her dependable leadership and for Chester's continued partnership in providing police services to our community."

The review also complimented the entire department crediting the "service they provide reflects well on Chief Dubiel's leadership."

The review cited the "excellent" cooperation with the State Police in the search for a missing person. The board had no further comments and accepted the review, which goes to Chester as host community.

New town sign

The town thanked Jennifer and Greg Girard for their contribution of a Welcome to Blandford sign, which will be placed at the Blandford/Russell town line.

Shartrand said it has been decided to install the



Photo by Corrine Shartrand

The new town sign for the town of Blandford will be installed in the spring at the Blandford/Russell town line.

sign in the spring, after winter weather. She and her husband will contribute the four-by-fours on which the sign will be placed.

A flower box will be under the sign on the posts and there will be a solar powered light to illuminate it.

Consolidating permitting representative

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera proposed to the board that the chair indefinitely hold this position of local government representative, "because that's the ultimate filter of these consolidated permits."

In a prepared motion

statement, board member Ted Cousineau read, "I move to designate select board chair as the town of Blandford's local government representative under 225 CMR 29.00 as of Oct. 1, 2026. This responsibility shall attach to the office of Select Board chair and pass aromatically to each select board chair with no fixed expiration date unless amended or rescinded by vote of select board." The motion passed with Cousineau and member Corinne Shartrand approving and Chair Jackie Coury abstaining.

Coury explained that

this is the Department of Energy Resources process for submitting siting applications. She added that she would track her time so the "state can understand how much time this takes for towns to support."

Summary of 225 CMR 29.00

A November 2024 law promoting a clean energy grid, advancing equity and protecting ratepayers ("2024 Climate Act"), streamlined the siting and permitting process for clean energy infrastructure.

The current siting and

SIGN, page 6

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CHESTER

Martenson wins selectmen bid

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The fourth time was the charm for Christopher Martenson in his bid to become a Chester selectman.

Martenson won in a special election held on Sept. 19, 2026 to replace Craig Gauthier, who was stepping down. A seven-year resident of the town, Martenson won the seat garnering 96 of 126



Christopher Martenson

votes cast for that position, allowing him to complete the final year of Gauthier's term.

Martenson will then have to run again next May for a regular three-year term.

Long-time town leader Bob Daley called Martenson, "One of our

MARTENSON, page 11

HUNTINGTON

Huntington Select Board holds tax classification hearing

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The Huntington Select Board's Oct. 7 meeting opened with a tax classification public hearing.

Attending were Chairman Roger Booth, members Rob Drabiuk and John McVeigh (attending remotely) and Town Administrator Jennifer Pelouquin.

Harald Scheid from the Regional Resource Group recommended keeping a single tax rate for both residen-

tial and business properties for Fiscal Year 2027.

In essence, there aren't enough business properties in the town to make a substantial difference for homeowners without raising business rates substantially. Assessors Christine Stochlinski chairman) and Roxanne Pin were also in attendance.

A motion to set a single tax rate for all property classifications passed unanimously. The FY 26 tax rate was \$14.77. The estimated rate for FY27 is \$15.21, but

could change upon review by the Department of Revenue after the town's tax documentation is submitted, Pelouquin later explained.

Nov. 3 election

The public hearing closed and regular business resumed. Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth reported on the Tuesday, Nov. 3 state election warrant. Fieldstad-Booth recommended a slate of six election workers, who were approved unanimously. She is still recruiting counters, who will hand count the results

including nine ballot questions that night after the polls close.

Fieldstad-Booth is looking into securing a tabulator for the town, but will not have one for the November election. The select board approved the election warrant.

Driveway flooding issue

Discussion that began at the Sept. 23 meeting continued on an appeal by Mary Arkoette, 21 Nagler Cross Road, to have the town adjust the road to keep her driveway from washing out.

Significant damage has occurred to her yard and home during heavy rain storms, including her deck washing away and her basement repeatedly flooding. On advice of Highway Superintendent Brad Curry, Arkoette has purchased culverts and gravel and was looking for assistance in installing it.

Booth explained that it would be her responsibility and cost to install that culvert.

Once that is in, Booth and Curry will look at

whether or not the next road grading could help divert some of the water running onto her property. McVeigh pointed out that maintenance of driveway culverts is the responsibility of property owners.

To date, Arkoette said that she has spent about \$1,350 in materials and preparation; Curry estimates

SELECT BOARD, page 10



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CHESTERFIELD

Town Clerk announces state election information

CHESTERFIELD – The Chesterfield Town Clerk announces early in person voting for the Nov. 3 state election.

Early in person voting hours at the Town Clerk’s office are Saturdays, Oct. 17 and Oct. 24 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Tuesdays, Oct. 20 and Oct. 27 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and Thursdays, Oct. 22 and 29 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. On election day, Tuesday, Nov. 3 the polls are open 7 a.m.-8 p.m. in the Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road.

Eligible voters may also request a Vote-by-Mail ballot for the November

State Election. Information about requesting a ballot is available through the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth.

For questions about early voting or Vote by Mail, they may call the Town Clerk’s Office at 413-296-4741.

FLORENCE

Florence Community Band to perform free concert Oct. 18

FLORENCE – The Florence Community Band will perform a free concert on Sunday, Oct. 18 at 2 p.m. in Black Birch Vineyard,

108 Straits Road, North Hatfield.

Priscilla M. Rose is the director. The concert “Uncorked and Unplugged Musice for Sunday Afternoon.”

People may visit facebook or www.florencecommunityband.com.

Cécilia performs Celtic and Québécois music on Oct. 24

FLORENCE – On Saturday, Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) three of Canada’s finest musicians, Cécilia brings together the best of many musical worlds in their explorations of traditional, Celtic and Québécois music at BOMBYX Center of Arts and Equity, 130 Pine St.

The trio features Timi Turmel on accordion, Erin Leahy on piano and Courtney Drew on fiddle. Cécilia performed across Canada and the U.S. and

at Celtic Connections in Scotland this past January. “We are looking forward to returning to BOMBYX as part of our October East Coast tour,” says pianist Erin Leahy. “We love meeting people and sharing our traditional music with enthusiastic audiences.”

Cécilia’s recent debut album Accent is an impressive offering full of vibrant rhythms and melodies, all resonating with a unique warmth and richness of expression. Every one of

their pieces is skillfully arranged and highlighted with influences from contemporary, classical, jazz, and swing styles.

Admission is \$12.50 to \$30 in advance and \$12.50 to \$35 at the door on Oct. 24.

People may visit https://bombyx.ludus.com/show_page.php?show_id=200534920 to get tickets. For more information, people may visit <https://bombyx.live/events/cecilia-2/>.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

COLLEGE NEWS

University of Rhode Island announces graudates

KINGSTON, R.I. – The University of Rhode Island announces local graduates.

Larissa Riley of Chesterfield earned a Bachelor of Arts in criminology and criminal justice and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. Katharine Burzynski of Westfield earned a Bachelor of Arts in communication studies.

Melanie Burek of Montgomery earned a Bachelor Degree in land-

scape architecture.

Adele Lashway of Williamsburg earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and marketing and Allysen Burke of Westfield earned a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology.

Jack DeMarinis of Montgomery earned Master of Science in electrical engineering and Rebecca Monti of Westfield earned a Master of Science in speech-language pathology.

Russo makes Dean’s list

EAST HARTFORD, CT – Brook Russo of Westfield made Goodwin University Dean’s list for the summer 2026 session.

Goodwin University is an innovative learning community that empowers hard-working students to become sought-after employees. Classes are conveniently offered year-round - days, evenings, weekends and online. Degrees may be flexibly layered across certificate, Associate, Bachelor and Master degree programs in a variety of in-demand fields.

HILLTOWNS

MassDOT announces I-90 bridge work

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

In Becket bridge painting will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 20.0 nightly now through the morning of Friday, Oct. 16 from 7 p.m.-5 a.m.

In Montgomery and Russell bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound at mile marker 36.0 on Thursday, Oct. 15, from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Good Neighbor Energy Fund offers home energy grants

Heating oil is now averaging \$6.12 per gallon statewide, up from \$3.53 a year ago.

That’s a 74% increase and works out to roughly \$700 more for 275 gallons at today’s average price.

The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund reopens for its 2026-27 campaign on Oct. 19 and provides eligible households facing temporary financial hardship with grants of up to \$400 toward a home energy expense.

The fund helps fill the gap for Massachusetts residents who do not qualify for

traditional state or federal assistance, and income eligibility guidelines have been increased for the upcoming campaign.

More than 1,250 Massachusetts households received assistance during the 2025-26 campaign.

For Western Massachusetts coverage, people can coordinate an interview with Kristen Fellmann of Berkshire Gas, subject to availability, as well as GNEF Chair Justin Stearns and The Salvation Army to discuss local affordability pressures, eligibility and how residents can seek assistance.

DO YOU KNOW?



Turley Publications photo by Deborah Daniels

In making an apple pie the photographer’s brother-in-law pulled this apple peeler out to use. We could not fathom what the little metal cage at the top of the peeler did. Does anyone know its use? If so please email countryjournal@turley.com.

WORTHINGTON

COA hosts First Aid for seniors

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Council on Aging host on Wednesday, Oct. 21 at 1 p.m. a workshop on First Aid for seniors in the

Worthington Town Hall.

Presented by Rick and Ginger Scott, retired EMTs, they will provide a refresher and share the latest safety

procedures.

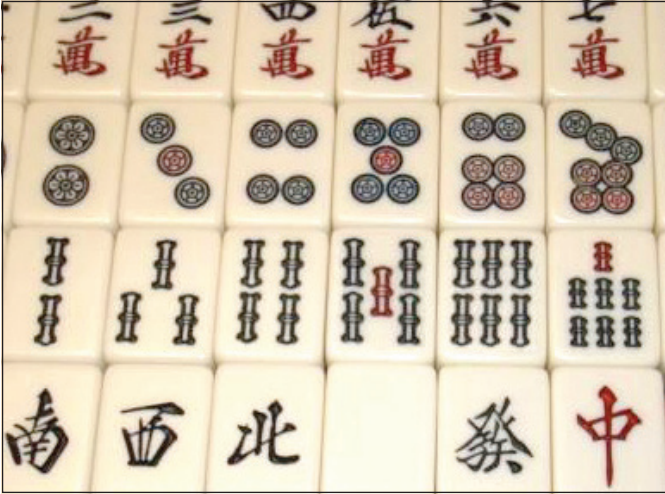
A question/answer period will follow. Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome.

DALTON

Library holds weekly Mahjong games

DALTON – The Dalton Library, 462 Main St., holds a weekly American Mahjong meet up on Fridays at 1-3 p.m.

Beginners are welcome. Registration is required. People may call 413-684-6112 or email dalton@cwmars.org for more information or to register.



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