

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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BLANDFORD

Board discusses hazard mitigation

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Land Use and Environment Planner Derek Strahan presented the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Hazard Mitigation is "any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards." His presentation, which is available on the town website, promotes things that can be done to help the town prepare for natural hazards such as drought, earthquakes, flooding, temperature extremes, hurricanes and other severe storms including thunder storms and tornadoes, vector borne diseases and wildfire. Vector-borne diseases are caused by bites of disease-carrying organisms like mosquitoes and ticks; diseases might be Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Malaria or Lyme disease.

Assets to protect are town buildings, utilities, communication facilities, historic structures and vulnerable population. The 2016 plan addresses mitigation strategies and new possibilities.

Updating the document will help the town acquire funding for hazard mitigation. "Every dollar spent on hazard mitigation, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency," said Strahan, "saves six dollars on future losses."

The components of the

HAZARD, page 6

HALLOWEEN in the Hilltowns



There are many outliers on North Blandford Road.



The sign at the porch reads "Dead and Breakfast Inn" in Maggy and Brad Curry's backyard. She's been collecting Halloween items for 25 years and they almost all come out of the closet for All Hallow's Eve.



Some of the Halloween decor at the Sanderson Brook Road home of Maggy and Brad Curry.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm



Strange creatures lurk on Gore Road.

BLANDFORD

Discovery of Jethro Jones descendants

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The question is, how did the Sheffield Historical Society come to be involved with the discovery of the descendants of Blandford's Black Revolutionary War hero?

According to the SHS now Education Coordinator Paul O'Brien, president of the organization at the time, the society applied for a Mass Humanities grant through their Expand Massachusetts Stories area. The title of their proposed project was, "After Elizabeth Freeman: the Untold Story of the Black Community of Sheffield."

This was a project to research the history of Sheffield's Black community between 1780-1915, resulting in a pamphlet, lectures, educational programs, interactive exhibits, for use to present that story to a local, state and national audience. The 2022 award for \$20,000 enabled SHS to accomplish this.

As a result, O'Brien said, "We researched and collected and created genealogies. We actually have 23,000 Black families connected to our Sheffield data base which is pretty amazing." The SHS kept building out black family histories and have presentations, zoom calls and publications as a result.

Then the SHS connected with Jocelyn Jones Arnold, who thought she might be part of that Jones family in Sheffield. The SHS kept digging and Jocelyn became a primary researcher and resource.

But O'Brien said, "What really got it kicked off was an odd sequence of events."

He relayed the story of a Superbowl Sunday about three years ago. An elderly

DISCOVERY, page 7

HUNTINGTON

Select Board discuss County Road traffic study and Pettis Field baseball diamond upgrade

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

At their Oct. 22 meeting, the Huntington Select Board announced that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is doing a traffic study on County Road.

The steep and windy road has been the site of numerous accidents in recent years and, depending upon study results, may be closed to through traffic in the future. At a minimum, the road needs to be closed when emergency personnel are dealing with an accident, as there are many sections that do not have a "shoulder" to provide extra space.

Chairman Roger Booth, members William Hathaway

and John McVeigh and Town Administrator Jennifer Pelloquin were all present for the nearly three hour meeting.

Unregistered vehicles

Police Chief Brian Kowal reported on a complaint filed about unregistered vehicles located at 32 Russell Road. This property is in probate and Kowal gave the owner 30 days to remove the vehicles before fines are levied. Those 30 days end next week. Kowal reported that the owner has been cooperative and Kowal is willing to offer him a time-limited permit to have the vehicles there, as allowed by a town bylaw. The select board moved to not exceed another 30 days

from Oct. 22. Integrity Trailer is working with them and Booth stated he wants to see a transfer of ownership to Integrity if they are going to hold the vehicles.

Road details

Kowal also presented a list of streets designated for police detail when road work is being done, which Board agreed. Booth also asked for a sign at both ends of County Road plus Searle Road; if there's a road detail or accident on County Road, all through traffic should be directed to use Route 66.



Paul Graham

Highway superintendent

Highway Superintendent Bradley Curry met with the board to discuss vehicle/equipment maintenance issues. Curry is implementing a daily inspection book for every vehicle that logs the number of hours it is in use each day, which will be used to calculate maintenance and servicing needs. Curry shared a proposal for an embankment repair related to an accident in August. Costs from the Bartlett proposal totaled \$5,600. Curry spoke to another company, who gave a rough estimate

of \$2,500. Work cannot take place until a review by the Conservation Commission is undertaken. "That should have already been repaired," Booth said. Costs of repairs will be covered by the insurance company.

Curb machine

The board also approved renting a curb machine from Able Machine Tools for a week at \$1,100; Hathaway will train the highway staff in use of this equipment to repair the berm at 14 Basket St.. A request for a logging truck to access land in Russell using Blandford Hill Road was denied by the Board, with Hathaway abstaining on the vote. Curry reported that the town did not get

grant funding for County and Littleville Roads; he was told the application was fine but there wasn't enough funding for all applicants. They will reapply in the next round and the liaison from Tighe and Bond will prepare more detail for the next application.

Repairs on the salt shed roof begins tomorrow.

Pettis Field

Paul Graham, representing Gateway Little League, presented a proposal on maintenance they plan to do on Pettis Field. The 12 point proposal included items such as marking the field to proper Little League dimensions, cutting

BOARD, page 3



Becket.....2	Easthampton.....8	Montgomery.....11	Plainfield.....9
Blandford.....6, 7	Florence.....8	Northampton.....8	Puzzle Page.....10
Business Directory.....3	Hilltowns.....3	Obituary.....10	Schools & Youth.....8
Chester.....11	Huntington.....3	Opinion.....4, 5, 6	Stockbridge.....9
Classifieds.....13	Middlefield.....9	Otis.....8	Westfield.....9



BECKET

Becket Arts Center announces November events

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will hold its annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Marketplace on Saturday, Nov. 1 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

More than 20 artists and crafters will be selling their creations in plenty of time for holiday gift-giving. For more information and a list of vendors, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

The arts center will offer a painting demonstration by Sean McCusker on Sunday, Nov. 2 from 1-2 p.m. McCusker's glazed landscapes are made up of roughly thirty thin, transparent layers, a technique that results in glowing compositions of dark shadows suspended in light. McCusker will be doing these demonstrations every Sunday of the month, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30.

The arts center will hold its weekly free, drop-in community sing-a-long on Tuesday, Nov. 4 from 6:30-8 p.m. Led by Paula Langton, a Certified Linklater Voice Teacher, this low-pressure gathering is open to everyone regardless of experience or confidence level. All that's required is a love of singing. For more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org Langton's sing-a-longs will be held every Tuesday of the month: Nov. 4, 11, 18 and 25.

The Becket Arts Center will offer its weekly all-levels yoga class with Rima Sala on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 9:30-10:30 a.m. \$5 to \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members. For more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

This class will also be held on Thursdays throughout the month, except for Thanksgiving on Nov. 6, 13 and 20.

The Becket Arts Center will host a free opening reception for "Battalion Scapes," on Thursday, Nov. 6, from 5-7 p.m. The exhibit features photographs taken by Christopher St. Clair Boswell during his service as a U.S. Navy "Seabee" stationed in the Caribbean in the 1950s.

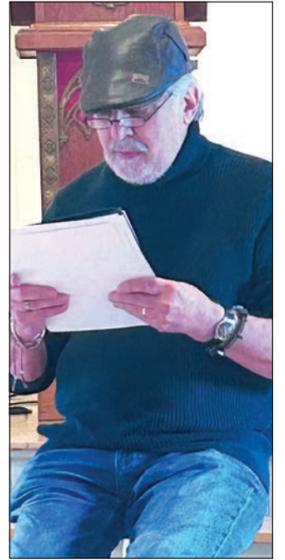
Becket Arts Center will present "No Background Music," a play written and read by actor and voice teacher Normi Noel, on Sunday, Nov. 9 from 2-4 p.m. The work is inspired by Noel's conversations with Vietnam veteran Penny Rock, a journey the two took together to Vietnam and letters and recordings Rock preserved from her tour of duty. Discussion will follow the one-hour reading. The subject matter might be upsetting for some audience members and the event is for adults only. Free, though donations are greatly appreciated. For registration and more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

They will host an evening of craft-making on Monday, Nov. 10, from 6:30-8 p.m. People may bring a current project whether it's knitting, sketching or something else entirely and share ideas and inspiration alongside other local crafters. Maker Mondays will continue every second and fourth Monday of the month until the end of the year. Free. The



One of the photos by Christopher St. Clair Boswell during his service as a U.S. Navy "Seabee" stationed in the Caribbean in the 1950s. An opening reception will be held Thursday, Nov. 6 from 5-7 p.m.

Submitted photos



The Becket Arts Center will host its annual Talent/No Talent Showcase on Friday, Nov. 14 from 5-8 p.m. in which community members share their unique talents or their current projects.



This is one of the art items for sale and the Becket Arts Center annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Marketplace on Saturday, Nov. 1.



Becket Arts Center will hold an African drumming class on Monday, Nov. 10 from 5-6 p.m. with Rick Shrum.

next Maker Monday will be Monday, Nov. 24.

The Becket Arts Center will hold an African drumming class on Monday, Nov. 10 from 5-6 p.m. Rick Shrum, who has taught African drumming for over 40 years, will introduce traditional drums and percussion instruments and guide participants in creating stimulating, joy-filled, multi-part rhythms. All instruments are provided and no experience is necessary. This is for ages 12 and older. Cost is \$15 per class; \$10/\$5 for members; teens are free. Drop-ins are

welcome. For registration and more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org. Rick Shrum will offer these classes twice a month; the next one will be Monday, Nov. 24.

The Becket Arts Center will host its annual Talent/No Talent Showcase on Friday, Nov. 14 from 5-8 p.m. in which community members share their unique talents or their current projects in a friendly and supportive setting. The stage will be open to musicians, poets, playwrights, actors, hobbyists and more. For

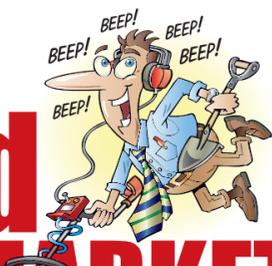
more information and to register, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

The arts center will offer a needle-felting workshop on Saturday, Nov. 15 from 1-3:30 p.m. Tina Sweet will guide participants in the making of a seasonal, two-dimensional wool painting. All skill levels are welcome. Tools and materials will be provided. Workshop fee is \$80 for non-members and \$70/\$60 for members; \$40 Card to Culture Member and Youth grades 9 to 12, free.

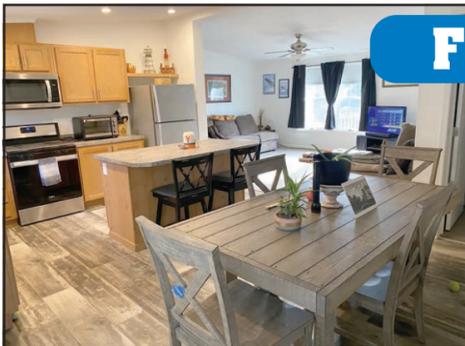
The Becket Arts Center

will present a cabaret evening, "Beginning to See the Light," with Lara Tupper and Ben Kohn on Saturday, Nov. 15, from 7-9 p.m. Tupper sang in Barry Manilow's backup choir before holding residences at international Hilton Hotels. Kohn, who first sat at a piano at age six, performs in the US and abroad with blues, rock and jazz ensembles. The duo will present spirited interpretations of tunes from the American songbook and musical theater. The performance is free, though donations are appreciated.

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Ellenor Downer
Editor
CJ 10/30/25

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HUNTINGTON

Steve Hamlin to delivery author talk at library

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – Local author and Huntington resident Steve Hamlin will be at the Huntington Public Library, 7 East Main St., on Saturday, Nov. 8 at 1:30 p.m. to talk about his latest book “Travel on \$50/day (or less): Camping in the U.S. and Beyond.”

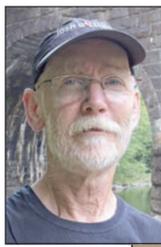
The book tells the story of the Hamlins’ transitioning from tent to van camping in order to travel out west while minimizing chances of bear encounters. It describes disbursed (off the grid) camping or boondocking as well as how he outfitted their van/camper for power, water, cooking and comfort.

In addition to how to outfit a van to become a home on wheels, topics include how to set up camp, food, hygiene, comfort, entertainment, planning and safety. People will hear more about how the couple equipped their van for travels throughout the country without paying an arm and a leg.

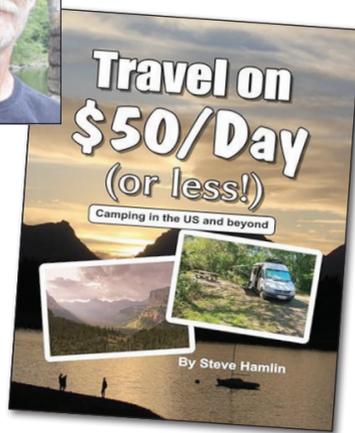
November’s “Artist of the Month” will feature the work of the late Mary Elizabeth “Betty” Langlois, who was known for her oil and watercolor paintings that featured outdoor scenes and animals. Works from this beloved local artist will be displayed at the library all month. Stop in anytime in November to celebrate her ongoing impact on the com-

munity or attend a reception in her honor on Saturday, Nov. 22 at noon.

Two special events for children are on the November calendar. Celebrate International STEM/STEAM Day on Saturday, Nov. 8 at 11 a.m. to learn how to make your very own magnetic slime. This activity is free of charge, but registration is required by visiting HuntingtonPublicLibrary.org/events to register online. Also this month is the Family Center Playgroup on Friday, Nov. 21 at 10



Steve Hamlin



a.m. This fun-filled morning with the Hilltown Community Health

Center’s Family Center is geared for ages 5 and under.

Regular monthly events continue through November, including weekly story hours on Mondays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. Crafternoon will be held on Thursday, Nov. 13 at 4 p.m. People may bring a craft to work on or use the library’s materials. Game Night is Thursday, Nov. 20 at 4 p.m. and all are invited to bring their own game or play one of the library’s.

The Book Club pick for November is “North Woods” by Daniel Mason.

This book tells intertwined stories of humans and animals who took up residence in a Western Massachusetts home over its 400 year history. Each entry tells the story using a different format such as a letter, song or field notes. Copies can be picked up at the library (while available), ordered through inter-library loan or borrowed through Libby for e-readers. The Book Club will meet on Thursday, Dec. 4 at 4 p.m. to discuss this book.

Questions or suggestions are always welcome. People may call the Huntington Public Library at 413- 512-5206, email library@huntingtonma.us or visit their website huntingtonpubliclibrary.org.

BOARD

from page 1

and edging the diamond to specified dimensions, re-establishing coaches boxes on the first and third base-lines, and installing new base anchors and pitchers’ plates. Repairs to the dug-outs, fencing, and storage shed were also included. They are seeking grant funding to acquire fill next year. The board unanimously approved.

Library

In new business, Library Director Amanda Loiselle said the library plans to organize a scavenger hunt around town as part of the 2026 Summer Reading Program. She asked if Town Hall would be willing to take part. Booth asked that she submit a general outline of what she wants to do and when. Some town buildings may be painted and Route 112 bridge construction also needs to be considered in this planning.

Pay increase

The board also approved a 2% increase in pay rates for highway winter help. There is a surplus in the highway department payroll line due to an unfilled position earlier this year, which can help cover the increase.

Insurance premiums

Health insurance premiums are expected to rise by 20% for current employees and by 19% for retirees. The town will cover 75% of the increase and will have a resulting shortfall. Also, a new highway employee has signed on for health insurance which wasn’t budgeted.

Special Town Meeting

Booth asked Pelouin

to have all departments look at line items that they believe will be short funded, to prepare for a Special Town Meeting in January. It was agreed that a Special Town Meeting held before the Annual Town Meeting may still be needed, but should only be for items that they didn’t foresee.

Basket Street Landfill

The Basket Street Landfill and resulting grant-funded water line is going well, with 126 feet and one hydrant already completed. The town has received its first invoice from Tighe & Bond with 30 days to pay, but the town hasn’t received the funds or grant contract yet. Pelouin will follow up on the delay and has asked the accountant to set up a special revolving account for this, which can be done with reimbursement grants. Booth asked Pelouin to track her hours on this project. In related business, the Board of Health and Water/Sewer Department plan to give a timeline for Basket Street residents to decide to hook into the new town water line.

Stanton Avenue project Hathaway reported that the Stanton Avenue Infrastructure project seems to be on schedule and going well. The water lines should be done now, other than hooking up to houses. They are about to start on sewer and drainage.

Tables items

A number of agenda items were tabled including the Master Plan, Gas and Diesel Pump Meters (on hold until Special Town Meeting), 2025 Priorities, North Hall Painting, town

email addresses, and the FY’26 Northeast IT Contract. Garage doors for the highway garage are going out to bid now but work will be done in the spring, to be paid through ARPA.

Other business

Pelouin reported on the proposed Municipal Empowerment Act which appears to be reduce paperwork for towns like ours, by raising the procurement procedures for supplies and services from \$50k to \$100k and eliminating the Comm Buys system. The board authorized Pelouin to reach out to our legislators and advocate for the bill.

Contracts for the FY’26 gasoline agreement with O’Connell Oil Associates; the FY’26 diesel agreement with O’Connell Oil Associates, and FY’26 heating oil agreement with Pioneer Valley Oil and Propane have all been finalized and signed by the vendors and Select Board. A change to the contract of Treasurer Ryan Mailloux was approved and signed. The Treasurer will be at Town Hall alternating Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission has approved the all alcohol package store license for Pizgee Enterprises Inc. DBA Huntington Liquor Store, which has paid their \$600 fee plus advertising fee. The board signed the license. A \$2,265.74 invoice from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission for administrative costs related to the Stanton Avenue Project was moved, approved and signed.

HILLTOWNS

MassDOT lists I-90 roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces it will be performing daytime bridge work on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of Becket, Montgomery and Russell.

In Becket bridge work and lane closures will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile markers 18.4 and 20.0, beginning on now through Friday, Oct. 31 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

In Montgomery and Russell bridge work and lane closures will be conducted on I-90 westbound at mile marker 36.0, beginning now through Friday, Oct. 31 from 6 a.m.-noon.

Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to

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

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.



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**TOWN OF WORTHINGTON
HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT OPENING
Highway Department**

The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest and resumes from qualified candidates to fill the position of Highway Superintendent.

Nature of work: The Highway Superintendent is responsible for administering and overseeing the daily activities of the Highway Department including the maintenance and repair of town roads, parks, bridges, equipment maintenance and snow/ice removal operations.

This is a benefited position which requires a thorough knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of highway department maintenance, construction and procurement.

Salary rate range: \$69,513.60 – \$101,254.40 with annual COLA and STEP adjustments as well as possible winter overtime.

More information can be found on the Town of Worthington website: www.worthington-ma.us

Please send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: selectboard@worthington-ma.us. This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.

The Town of Worthington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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GUEST COLUMN



Do I need to sign up for an Online Social Security Account?

Dear Rusty:

I recently heard the tail end of a radio program, which was discussing "signing up for my Social Security account."

I am now 76 years old and have been receiving my SSA monthly amount directly into a credit union account for years. Since the time when I applied to begin receiving Social Security, I have had no need to contact SSA again since everything is working fine. I do not like having to use the Internet. It seems the government is just giving me busy work and requiring me to remember usernames, passwords, etc. just when I am trying desperately to simplify my life. Can you shed any light on the need to sign up for an online SSA account by answering this:

1) What is the background regarding this "call" by the SSA to create an online account?

2) Why is the SSA wanting us to have "accounts"? Mysteriously, no one I have asked is able to give me a reason why we should have "accounts" on-line.

3) What happens if I do not sign-up for an "account"?

4) Is there a window of time during which we must "sign up"?

Thanking you in advance for any light you can shed on this issue.

Signed: Concerned Senior

Dear Concerned:

While creating an online Social Security account is recommended by the Social Security Administration, doing so is more of a convenience than a necessity.

It is mainly a way to confirm your identity to Social Security in advance, in case you need to contact them in the future to make changes to your SS account. If you don't plan to make any changes, then it is not mandatory for you to create an online "my Social Security" account. Nothing will change for you – you will continue to get your monthly benefits as you have been doing all these years.

Regarding your specific questions:

1. What is the background?

Social Security has, for many years, been encouraging people to do business with them "online." This is, essentially, a way to improve the efficiency of a) getting your needs handled more quickly, and b) improving SSA's internal efficiency so as to handle more transactions with fewer staff.

2. Why does SSA want you to have an online account?

SS fraud has become an issue, with nefarious individuals constantly trying to get at a person's Social

Security (and other) government benefits. As part of its process for online access, SSA has evolved to a quite secure online identification process, which includes modern security techniques. These include things like "Two-Factor Identification" and use of certain specific identification measures through two main programs for access to government systems (known as LOGIN.gov and ID.me). These create a single pre-verified way to access multiple government systems (such as SSA, IRS, VA, etc.). It means that only one ID and password are required to access numerous government systems and ensures that those who access the account are the correct person. It is primarily a way to protect your benefits from others and prevent fraud.

3. What happens if I do not sign-up for an "account"?

Nothing will happen, unless you have a need to change something with Social Security. For example, if you for some reason wanted to change the financial account to which your SS benefits are deposited. With a secure LOGIN.gov account you could make that change quickly using your online account. Without a secure online account, you would, instead, need to make an appointment to visit your local Social Security office to make the change and provide proof of who you are. Again, this is to reduce fraud.

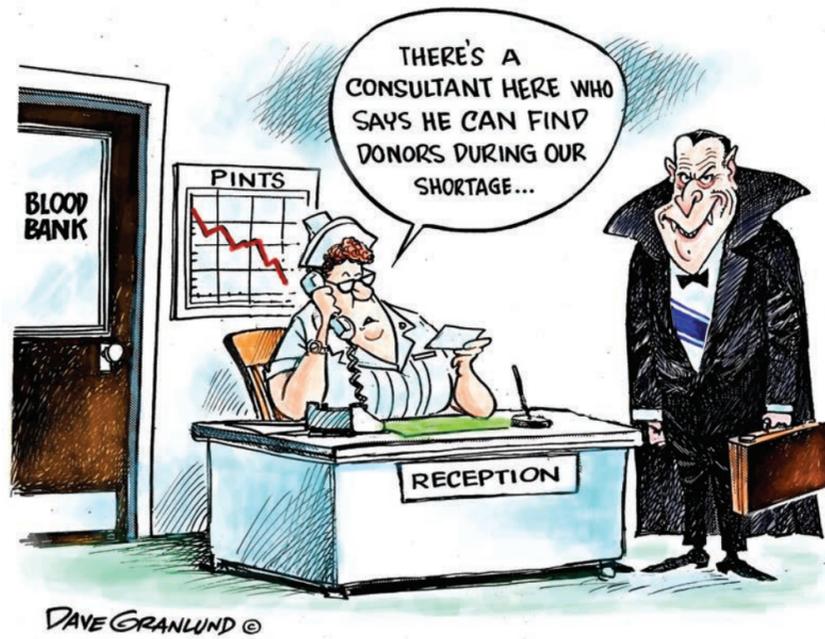
4. Is there a window of time during which we must "sign up"?

As indicated above, there is no time in which you must "sign up." If you do not sign up for online access, and don't need to change anything with respect to your SS benefits, then you do not need to create an online account.

So, while creating an online SSA account is highly recommended, it is not mandatory for those who have no need to interact directly with the Social Security Administration.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

Pumpkins of lore and legend

I miss the days of carving pumpkins with the kids. Last year was the first year time got away from us and we just didn't get around to doing it.

I guess the rituals aren't quite as important as they used to be when the girls were younger. Alas, time marches on.

I still got a kick out of decorating the porch with pumpkins, big and small, orange and white. Not a Jack-o'-Lantern to be seen, just a pretty autumnal scene.

It is safe to say that we New Englanders have a fond affection for the pumpkin. And by the look of the neighborhood, we enjoy this fruit (yes, fruit) more on our

doorsteps these days than we do in our kitchens. This wasn't always the case; in fact, the pumpkin was a staple in the diets of Native Americans long before the pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock.

The pumpkin is thought to have originated in Mexico. Seeds found there of a distant Cucurbit relative were dated all the way back to 7000 to 5500 B.C.! In our

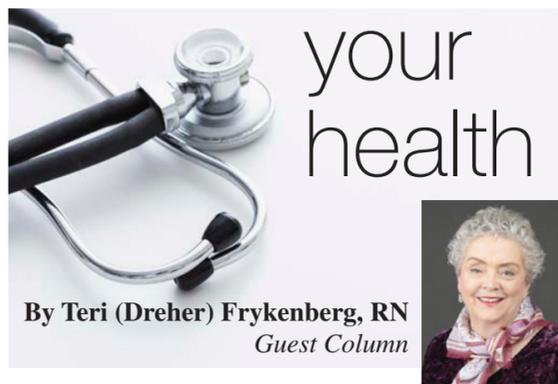
more recent past, Native Americans taught colonists how to plant pumpkins; soon they became indispensable in their diets.

The hard outer skin of the pumpkin allowed it to be stored for a long period of time, sustaining the community throughout the winter months. It was also versatile, used in stews, bread baking, and even in desserts.

Historians speculate that the pumpkin pie may have evolved from the century's long practice of removing the top of a pumpkin, straining out the seeds and more stringy flesh, adding milk, honey and spices and bak-

GARDEN, page 6

The alcohol conundrum



Excessive alcohol consumption has long been recognized as an illness that contributes to societal problems like drunk driving and domestic violence, along with a host of physical ailments that are potentially fatal.

Right up until the 21st century, though, there was consensus that moderate alcohol intake did little harm, and might even have had some health benefits. Red wine, in particular, was found to contain antioxidants like resveratrol that may lower blood pressure and polyphenols, which may improve blood flow to the heart.

That was then, and this is now.

Increasingly, research is finding that the risks of even moderate alcohol intake outweigh its benefits.

Alcohol consumption is a risk factor for several types of cancer, including breast, colorectal and oral cavity cancers. According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), moderate drinkers have a 1.23-fold higher risk of alcohol-related cancers.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption, and that even relatively low levels can increase the risk of breast cancer.

And a large British study released just this month found "light" drinking (about an ounce of spirits a day for men and half an ounce for women) was associated with an increase in cancer deaths among older participants. The risk was greater for those who had existing health problems or who lived in low-income areas.

Just as cigarettes were once thought to be healthful and are now known to be dangerous, alcohol is on a trajectory to becoming another health pariah. Dr. Victoria Amesbury, an internist who has been practicing for 36 years, would be OK with that.

"One of the amazing things I run into all the time is well-educated women who drink," she says. "There are studies that indicate even two drinks a week is toxic, and that it is now thought there is a definite connection between alcohol and breast cancer."

"But when I tell a patient to stop drinking, they say all their friends drink and they don't want to be an out-cast."

There's the rub. Alcohol is so ingrained in our society that it's hard to imagine life without it. Around the time America was founded, alcohol was actually thought to warm the body and aid digestion. It was used to treat colds and fevers and even given as a sedative during childbirth. During the mid-19th century, alcohol was the main painkiller used in surgery.

Look back at movies from the '30s and '40s (I'm thinking particularly of "The Thin Man" series) in which

HEALTH, page 6

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Country Journal welcomes Election letters to the editor

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

Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by **noon Friday** to be considered for the following Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the

newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's

Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Country Journal.

OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

People lost in history

By Deborah Daniels
Guest Columnist

Halloween spirits are restless, let the hauntings begin.

Beartown State Forest in Stockbridge and Great Barrington is a place troubled by restless spirits. Consider Frederick Stark Pearson (1861-1915) who bought land in the southern section of Beartown State Forest in 1902, some 13,000 acres to be precise. He hoped to create a game preserve, but never lived to fulfill this dream.

While Austen Riggs (1876-1940) bought land here and built a stone cottage retreat. He was able to escape the demands of his patients with complex psychiatric problems. He had created the Austen Riggs Foundation, a facility for psychiatric patients by 1919. Both fell in love with the area and bought large tracts of land in what was known as Beartown, a farming community.

Don't dismiss Frederick Pearson as a slacker. He was not. He was an engineering genius with the Midas touch. Herein is some of his story. Pearson was born in a humble home in Lowell. He went to the local school briefly but left to find work, money was scarce. Then he took classes at Tufts University in Boston as often as his budget would allow. He worked at many railroad jobs, even one as a Boston & Maine ticket agent. He was noticed by Professor Dolbear (1837-1910), a Tufts professor who was a physicist and an inventor as well as instructor. He mentored Pearson and helped set him on a path of engineering ingenuity. Pearson studied and graduated with degrees in chemistry, mathematics and engineering - civil, electrical and mining engineering. He became an instructor at MIT for one year. However he was offered a position as manager of the Somerville Electric Company in Boston. This proved to be much more challenging to him. He went on to build the electric transportation system in Boston (electric streetcars) the forerunner to the subway system. He became the consulting engineer for the Brooklyn Heights Railway Co. in New York and he was appointed head engineer for the Metropolitan St. Railways of NYC.

Pearson had a reputation as an innovative electrical engineer, the best in America. He was contracted by governments and businesses as a consulting engineer for building power stations, building dams, build-

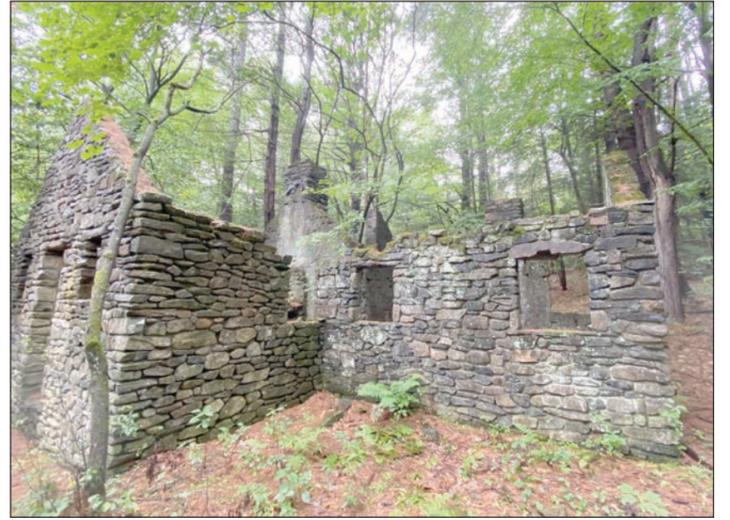
ing traction and tramway projects as well as building light and power companies. He was also a man with great business skills and foresight with ready financial backers. He was enormously in demand for delivering solid enterprises such as drilling irrigation wells in Texas, building dams and hydro river power projects in Europe, South America and Mexico. These enterprises paid off handsomely. His only loss was in building a tramway system in Mexico to which he lost everything due to corruption, bribery and the government nationalizing his project. He amassed great wealth through his many successful engineering projects.

He married Mabel Ward Pearson from Monterey. She had been a childhood sweetheart who was also from a wealthy family. They met again in Europe and agreed to marry. They had one daughter. She lived in England. They traveled to visit her in May of 1915, on what else but the biggest ocean liner ever built, the Lusitania. The British Cunard ocean liner the Lusitania was built for speed and luxury in Scotland, completed in 1906. It held the honor of the fastest transatlantic crossing time from Liverpool, England to New York City, USA. It was created as a royal mail ship, carrying the mail across the pond (Atlantic) in 12 days. Remember this was the only way mail was delivered, there were no airplanes. The Lusitania was a massive ship, 787 ft long and 87.8 ft wide with four 70 ft funnels. It had a crew of 693 sailors and accommodations for 2,300 passengers with a gross tonnage of 31,550 tons. The White Star Line's Titanic ship built in 1909 was 93 ft longer and 4.5 ft wider for comparison.

World War I was being fought at the time of Pearson's Atlantic crossing. Passenger ships carried civilians, so they were never targeted by enemy fire. However the German ambassador warned travelers that a state of war existed between Germany and Great Britain. Vessels flying the British flag were liable for destruction. So travelers on the Lusitania were sailing into a war zone. They did so at their own risk. This was an announcement that was published in many U.S. newspapers on April 30, 1915, one day before the Lusitania sailed. It had been announced to the newspapers earlier but it was not published until the day before departure. Many passengers did heed the warning and

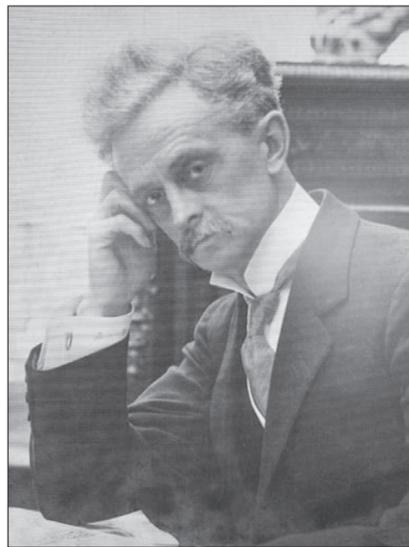


The remains of a stone cottage retreat by Austin Riggs in Beartown.



Another view of the Riggs cottage remains.

Turley Publications photos by Deborah Daniels



Frederick Stark Pearson was a passenger on the Lusitania when it was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland by a German submarine.



Captain Thomas Turner was captain of the Lusitania when it was torpedoed and sank off the coast of Ireland.



A photo of the Lusitania ocean liner.

Submitted photos

cancelled their trip.

The Lusitania sailed May 1, 1915 with 1,264 passengers. There were 290 people in 1st class (1/2 capacity), 601 people in 2nd class (maximum capacity 460 passengers) and 370 passengers in 3rd class (maximum capacity 1,186). There were 693 crew members and 3 stowaways. Unbeknownst to the public was a cargo of 173 tons of war supplies, 4.2 million rounds of rifle ammunition, 5,000 shrapnel filled artillery casings and 3,240 brass percussion fuses. This steerage was not declared. The passengers believed that America was maintaining its neutrality. Certainly President Woodrow Wilson had consistently vowed to keep America out of the war at all costs.

Captain Thomas Turner (1856-1933) was a seasoned and decorated ship captain having done this crossing many times in the past. The Lusitania was in very capa-

ble hands. It reached the coast of Ireland uneventfully. However 13 miles off the coast of Ireland there was a German U-Boat lurking. It was captured by Walther Schwieger with orders to sink all ships in the area. British intelligence discovered this and tried to advise Captain Turner how to proceed safely through the channel. Only he followed his own sailing instinct and navigated his own way through the treacherous channel. He was in a direct line of fire for the submarine. At 2:10 p.m. Schwieger launched a single torpedo that hit the Lusitania broadside. It sank within 18 minutes. The ocean water was 52 degrees, cold. Passengers had no time to board the 48 lifeboats on board. The boat listed to

starboard so badly most of those lifeboats were useless to passengers. Electric power was lost almost immediately, plunging the ship into darkness, all elevators and bulkhead doors were locked, trapping crew and passengers from escape. The number of passengers lost was 1,197, 94 were children. There were 128 Americans on board. A fact that later argued for American involvement in World War I.

The local Irish residents of Queenstown, rescued 767 floating passengers. The Cunard Line offered local fishermen cash rewards to bring in floating bodies. However so many bodies were never recovered. The Titanic cruise ship had been sunk in 1912 after hitting an iceberg. The Lusitania cruise

ship was sunk by a German torpedo on May 1, 1915. America did not enter WWI until two years after the Lusitania was sunk. Many illustrious American citizens died on the Lusitania and Frederick Stark Pearson was one of them. The cause of the ship's sinking was the illegal act of the Imperial German Government as decided in 1918. Eventually \$2.5 million was paid by the German government to Cunard in 1925. Tragedy on such a grand scale doomed the future of large ocean liners.

If you should hike in Beartown Forest and you listen carefully you may hear Frederick Stark Pearson cry out for his shattered dream of a big game preserve in Beartown.

Happy Hollereen

News, photo publication policy

As a community newspaper our focus has always been local news. While we try very hard to run upcoming events as a public service whenever space allows, space does not allow us to run an upcoming event repeatedly. Our policy is to limit publication of upcoming events to one article in advance of the event and, space permitting, a second brief reminder article the week prior to an event, and to run those articles in only one section of the paper, and not in multiple sections simultaneously.

All such public service announcements and photos are subject to space limitations and deadlines, therefore publication cannot be guaranteed. Whenever copy for the week exceeds allotted space, news copy will take priority, and public service copy is the first area to be cut. We also reserve the right to edit for style and space, and are under no obligation to print lists of sponsorships, or articles that arrive after deadline, unless time and space allows.

Deadline is Friday at NOON.

Pioneer Valley Assembly of God

Pastor Javier Melendez
63 Old Chester Rd.
Huntington MA 01050
413-667-3196
pvaglfe@gmail.com
www.pioneervalleyag.org
Facebook: Pioneer Valley Assembly of God
Sunday service: 10:30 a.m.

Hilltown Community Church

Rev. Dr. Robert Perreault
55 Main St., Russell, MA 01071
413-275-3232
Office: 413-862-3341
hilltownchurch3341@gmail.com
Sunday Mornings 10 a.m.

First Congregational Church of Williamsburg

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

Holy Family Parish

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

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship

Deacon Jerald Reinford
400 Huntington Rd.
Russell, MA 01071
(413) 297-6037
Sunday worship at 10am
Visitors appreciated.

First Congregational Church of Blandford

Pastor Ciprian Droma
91 Main St.
Blandford, MA 01008
413-848-2052
Sunday service 10 a.m.



OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

By Kim Savery, Stephany Conway, Mary Krol, Lindsey Maxwell, Jon Gould, Mark Ames, Sheela Haque, Donna Larocque, Monica Moran, Phil Barry
Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force

New Domestic Violence Law on Coercive Control is Having an Impact (October 2025).

In rural areas, people in abusive relationships are sometimes forbidden to use the family car. If they

are allowed to use the car, the car odometer might be monitored and they will be asked to account for where they have been. They may be controlled in other ways - denied access to a phone, forbidden from talking to a neighbor, kept from renewing needed prescriptions. Until recently, however, they could only get a restraining order if they could show physical violence, sexual violence, or imminent threat of these kinds of violence.

But the law changed last year, and it's having an impact. We are beginning to see local judges issue protective orders that say - no coercive control. Coercive

New domestic law has impact

control, now part of the legal definition of abuse, is defined as a pattern of controlling behavior that intentionally causes a person to reasonably fear physical harm or causes a reduced sense of physical safety or autonomy.

This means, when someone siphons the gas out of the car to prevent their partner from visiting family, when someone broadcasts nude pictures on social media to humiliate their partner, when someone won't let their partner sleep to sabotage their ability to keep a job, the courts might be able to help.

With a few exceptions, including the sharing of sex-

ually explicit images which only requires one offense, the court will require a pattern of behavior and not just one incident. This is unlikely to be a hurdle, however. These controlling behaviors are rarely one-offs.

To be clear, the new law doesn't mean someone can be arrested for coercive control on its own. It only allows survivors to apply for a restraining order from a local judge who will decide if their request meets the threshold established in the new law. If the judge does issue an order and it is violated, then police can make an arrest. But the hope is the order deters that behavior, allowing more people to live a

safe, dignified life.

October is domestic violence awareness month and it's a great time to get the word out about this new law. In a time of fiscal restraint, making sure people know about this new law is something concrete we can do that costs nothing but will make our communities safer.

We need to be cautious. Survivors, especially those from marginalized or unprotected communities, take a risk when they seek help from the legal system. If a survivor's order is denied it can in some cases increase danger, especially if the offender is high-risk or feels they have nothing to lose. We need to let

survivors decide what tools to use to protect themselves, and when to use them.

Still, one of our tools to reduce domestic violence just got much stronger. Now, when someone is trapped at home for days without heat, when someone is repeatedly forced to admit they are to blame for everything - even their abuse, when someone is told they are useless and stupid because they cannot find the car keys their partner hid, the legal system may be able to help.

Note: Hilltown Safety at Home, the hilltowns' local domestic violence agency, can be reached at 413-693-9977 or 413-667-2203.

GARDEN

ing it for hours in hot coals. Today, we continue to enjoy pumpkin pie, but mainly as a holiday treat.

When carving pumpkins became more and more trendy, breeders concentrated their efforts on large, elongated, hard-skinned and sturdy pumpkins, in other words, those that would lend themselves best to a spooky face. These, however, may not be the most satisfying to our taste buds.

The smaller, "sugar-type" pumpkin is more appetizing in texture and taste.

Many of you already know that pumpkins are good for you too! The dark orange color of the flesh is a giveaway that, just like carrots, yams and winter squash, the pumpkin is packed with beta carotene, the precursor to vitamin A.

Researchers have long been touting the benefits of

beta carotene to ward off infection and some types of cancer. It may also slow the aging process.

Besides that, pumpkins contain a healthy dose of potassium and fiber, are low in sodium and are fat free. Incidentally, pumpkin seeds when consumed regularly have shown to keep the prostate healthy.

They also contain a healthy dose of magnesium.

Did you ever wonder where the tradition of carving Jack-o'-Lanterns originated? It is thanks in part to an Irish folk tale of Stingy Jack, an unsavory figure who unwelcome in Heaven, outsmarted the devil and was left to roam the earth with only a burning coal to light his way. According to the legend, Jack put the coal in a carved out turnip (which he was fond of stealing!) and has been roaming ever since.

"Jack of the Lantern" has become simply "Jack-o'-Lantern." In Scotland and Ireland people made their own Jack-o'-Lanterns out of turnips or potatoes. In England, large beets were used. The tradition came with the immigrants to America; here they found the pumpkin perfect for carving. And so it has continued! Maybe I will have to carve one myself, just for old time's sake.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

from page 4

HEALTH

cocktails took center stage, consumed by glamorous people. How could we not fall in love with booze?

Should we all quit drinking cold turkey, particularly women? That's not likely to happen. Just as everyone hasn't been persuaded to give up cigarettes, not everyone will be persuaded to stop drinking alcohol, no matter what the research says.

I think the question becomes, "How do you mitigate your risk factors if you choose to continue drinking?"

For her patients who continue to drink, Dr. Amesbury recommends abstaining for three or four consecutive days each week, and then consume only light amounts the other days, no more than five ounces of wine. If you want more to drink, mix the wine with club soda or

another mixer.

Another tactic is to take a month-long "vacation" from drinking a couple of times a year, say a "dry January" and a "dry July." In those 31 days, research has found, moderate-heavy drinkers can see improvements in insulin resistance, blood pressure, body weight and cancer-related growth factors. It also allows liver cells to recover from alcohol's toxicity.

Only drinking alcohol during meals, drinking slowly, alternating alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages (particularly water!) are other measures you can take to mitigate some of the risks associated with alcohol.

There is also the growing trend of "mocktails," which can mimic favorite alcoholic drinks in flavor without the buzz. Think about mocktail mimosas, Moscow mules or sangria.

There was a time when a nonsmoker was considered weird, and now smokers are relegated to designated areas, or banned entirely. Maybe a time will come when not drinking is considered the cool thing to do. Until then, do what you can to lower your risk factors.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NShore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

from page 4

BLANDFORD

HAZARD

plan, the list of natural hazards and mitigation strategies were compiled by the Mitigation Committee. The plan will be discussed at



Nobody dreams of having multiple sclerosis

Some dreams are universal: hitting a ball over the Green Monster, winning the World Series with a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth inning. Finding out you have MS is not one of them.

Multiple sclerosis is a devastating disease of the central nervous system where the body's immune system attacks the insulation surrounding the nerves. It strikes adults in the prime of life - and changes lives forever.

To help make the dream of ending MS come true, call 1-800-FIGHT MS or visit us online at nationalmssociety.org.



Corrections policy

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



Inset, Pioneer Valley Commission Land Use and Environment Planner Derek Strahan addresses Select Board about Hazard Mitigation planning. Above, Resilient Dirt Roads group, Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay, Pioneer Valley Land Use and Environment Planner II Angela Panaccione and George Reichert report on their findings.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

another public meeting prior to submission to the state's Emergency Management Agency and FEMA

The committee members include Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera, Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay, Fire Chief Adam Dolby, Conservation Commission Chair Richard Gates and Select Board member Jackie Coury.

Specific concerns

He asked for specific concerns. George Reichert noted flooding by beaver dams located on land owned by Springfield Water and Sewer Commission. Strahan said SWSC could be included as a collaborator for miti-

gating this.

PVPC Land Use and Environment Planner II Angela Panaccione asked about new culvert installation. Strahan said that the previous plan included a study of the town's culverts and the revised action plan includes the installation of same.

Reichert also asked about plans to contact those seniors who live independently who might be in need of rescue in the event of a major incident. Is there a plan?

Strahan cited the current reverse 911, and he will bring this up to the committee at the next meeting.

Select Board member T.J. Cousineau asked about possible funding available to maintain "seasonal" roads to protect against fires. Strahan will bring that up to the committee as well.

Library Director Nicole Daviau said the library is not currently on the list as a potential shelter, but by the time the expansion project is completed in 2027, "The

library could have the ability to act as a shelter."

Dirt Roads

Reichert as liaison with PVPC along with Panaccione and Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay reviewed the groups activities and findings on the Resilient Dirt Roads program.

A survey of 80 homes on the town's dirt roads had a 37.5 % return. The average length of time homeowners live on these roads turned out to be 24-and-a-half years and "all want to see improvements," that ran the gamut from potholes to grading according to the survey.

Not just the homeowners, but property owners (no dwelling) and delivery people as well were "almost unanimous" in their comments about travel conditions. Panaccione said that PVPC had developed a manual on planning help for town highway departments. The need for new equipment was also cited and Panaccione said there might be a possibility for

"joint and shared purchase of equipment."

EPSEC update

Coury gave an update on the Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee which will be focusing on strengthening bylaws. Coury sent a letter to all communities who get water from Cobble Mountain Reservoir about raising concerns "regarding the proposed Commercial Battery Project located in close proximity to the reservoir/s watershed."

Communities included were Springfield, Westfield, Chicopee, West Springfield, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow and Ludlow. A copy was also sent to the town's State Senator Paul Mark.

Coury also said there is a need for direction on using the \$200,000 and the committee would go through Ferrera. EPSEC will also look into payment in lieu of taxes for solar installations, and Coury said she heard through Ferrera that a solar farm "can stay in Chapter 61" as long as certain requirements are met. One is a "predetermination" by the state, through a special program, and another is that the landowner will have to provide documentation annually to show money made from agricultural pursuits.

Library

Library Director Nicole Daviau told the board that the final paperwork for the Design Phase part of the library's expansion project was ready to be sent to the Massachusetts Board of

Library Commissioners.

There will be a town information session on the complete project overview and for questions and answers on Tuesday, Dec. 2 prior to a vote at a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 9.

Daviau explained that before the library could apply for the grant, the finances had to be approved by the Finance Committee and the Treasurer and that this would "not be an undue burden on the town taxpayers."

The library is already two-and-a-half months ahead of schedule. Daviau invited the community to stop by the library during open hours with any questions. Coury said, "You've done a great job with this."

Ferrera told the board the first Special Town Meeting will be Monday, Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. for a vote on the proposed moratorium and bill passing from former years.

Other business

Interviews were conducted for the Assistant Collector/Treasurer position.

The assessor's contract has been approved by legal and the board signed off on it for the next three years. She also told the board that the costs of employee health benefits have increased.

Ferrera gave the board requested information about a Town Planner.

The board is looking for information and clarification on land for a new Fire Station.

A final question on the number of Conservation Commission members should actually be five per vote of the town in 1982. There was an error in the bylaws on line; the appropriate Town Meeting was cited but the action was incorrect.

BLANDFORD

Select Board appoints final three members to EPSEC

By **Mary Kronholm**
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – The Energy Projects Siting and Engagement Committee now has its full complement of nine members.

The Select Board appointed three residents to the committee at their Monday, Oct. 20 meeting. They were Corinne Shartrand, Trae Jelinek and Richard Meczywor.

Other members on the EPSEC included a representative of the Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health and Fire Chief.

Blandford native Shartrand brings her experience from working at Strathmore Paper with envi-

ronmental concerns. In her application to EPSEC, she said she would help gather “all pertinent information in regards to possible future projects” and to share that information so everyone can “make clear decisions on having all the supported data needed.” She added that she is retired and can devote the time and energy to ensure the success of this committee and will do all I can to support the best interests for our town.

Jelinek is a five-year resident and is a Wind Turbine Technician for General Electric. On his application he said, “I feel like this is a good opportunity to contribute. Based on what I have read, the substation expansion is going to happen...I feel that it is critical to Blandford, for any of



Corinne Shartrand



Trae Jelinek



Richard Meczywor

the successful projects that go in...go in on Blandford’s terms.”

He brings both “technical understanding and a balanced community-minded perspective.” He has worked directly with renewable-energy technology and “I value the character of our town.”

Meczywor, resident for over 40 years, holds multiple degrees in science, including a Masters Degree in soil sci-

ence and is a registered soil evaluator as well as sanitarian. In his retirement he is sanitarian and health inspector for Northampton. He believes the town has lost local control and said, “there must be a discussion on how to deal with this situation.” And that his years of experience in business, finance, land developing and public health could add to the conversation...as long as data,

facts and clear reasoning are brought to an argument.”

The EPSEC is a town-level body created and approved by the Select Board Sept. 8 to centralize how the town evaluates, responds to, and engages around proposed energy infrastructure everything from commercial-scale solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems to transmission and substation work. The committee was formed in response to an increase in large-scale energy proposals affecting the town and is meant to help analyze proposals, coordinate municipal responses, and provide a structured public engagement pathway.

The committee was initially proposed by newly elected Select Board member Jackie Coury at the

Mission Clean Energy presentation in September. She posed the request for such a committee immediately prior to the presentation. This committee will focus on three projects: Eversource Expansion, Solar Field Builds in town and BESS.

This will help the town understand technical, legal, environmental, and financial implications of projects. Its responsibilities include reviewing project filings, coordinating town boards and staff, identifying technical consultants where needed, and ensuring public meetings and outreach are organized and accessible. The committee must operate under Massachusetts Open Meeting Law rules. ESPEC has a \$200,000 budget for fiscal year 2026.



The Kidder family, Joyce, Milton and Daniel, enjoyed the Friday Council on Aging lunch.

Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm



Lt. Greg Moss from the Hampden County Sheriff's Office attended the Friday COA lunch and spoke about services offered to seniors.

Seniors enjoy lunch and programs

BLANDFORD – Town seniors dined on teriyaki chicken kabobs, rice pilaf, salad and cranberry upside-down cake Friday at the noontime Council on Aging lunch.

After lunch, Lt. Greg Moss from the Hampden County Sheriff's office gave a presentation to the seniors on what services are available from his office. Through the Triad program.

The Hampden County Triad Program is a collaboration with local First Responders and the Senior Community “to promote

safe, healthy independent living.”

Services are varied and include a daily telephone program to check on the well-being of seniors who live alone; car seat installation, an electronic search and rescue tracking system for individuals with “cognitive conditions such as dementia” who may be at risk of wandering. They will also do “home safety assessments” and cover 240 points locating potential accident sites.

Then Alzheimer Association’s Meghan

LeMay gave information on brain health and an overview of dementia information.

COA Director Margit Mikuski reminds everyone that the annual Veterans’ Dinner is Saturday, Nov. 8 at 5 p.m. Invitations were sent to all veterans. If any veteran did not receive an invitation, they reserve a space by calling 413-848-4279 extension 400 and leaving a message. There is no charge to veterans and their spouse, but \$5 is asked for any additional non-family friends.



The lunch bunch are shown from left, Bing Hollings, Bob Lundgren, Mary Mangini, Steve Hart and Lloyd Martin.



This tiny mice attended Blandford Select Board executive session. Submitted photo

Executive session has surprise miniature visitor

BLANDFORD – The Select Board with a roll call vote went into Executive Session after Monday night’s meeting on Oct. 20.

That’s where the real excitement was. A very small mouse attended the meeting and apparently tried to participate in some way.

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera spotted the mouse first.

According to Ferrera, Select Board Chair Cara Letendre cautioned her not to capture it with bare hands

so Ferrera rescued the tiny mouse in a coffee cup. He was christened “Joe” as in Java – for the coffee cup.

The tiny critter was shown the door, safely and safe after a bite to eat. Ferrera fed him some crackers before putting him outside. After the meeting was over, Ferrera said Joe was right where she left him, on the front portico cement, “He was cold and shaking, so I brought him home,” she said. It was a happy ending.

Volunteer firefighters host pancake breakfast

BLANDFORD – The Blandford Volunteer Firefighters Association will host their 10th annual pancake breakfast on Saturday, Dec. 6 at the Town Hall from 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Santa will be there. There will be pancakes with maple syrup, bacon, sausage, breakfast beverages and coffee and tea. The

Recreation Committee will host a hot chocolate table and there will be the traditional raffle.

Donations for the raffle are already coming in, according to organizer Pat Lombardo. Anyone who would like to donate a raffle item can leave it at the Fire Department Training Center next to the Post Office on

Main Street any Wednesday night between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. or call Pat Lombardo at 413 454 5336 to have him pick up a raffle donation.

This year again Jennifer Girard of the Blandford Country Store will have a cookie decorating and an ornament making table which will give children a chance to decorate a holiday

cookie and create an ornament to hang on the family tree.

“Plan to come to the breakfast to support your local volunteer firefighters,” said Lombardo. “It’s a real community event.” The cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 5-to 12-years-old and children under 5 get breakfast free.

DISCOVERY

man fell asleep at the wheel of a car and plowed into one of the cemeteries and knocked over William Jones’ headstone.

William Jones was a Massachusetts 54 Black Regiment member from Sheffield, who was Jethro’s great-great-grandson. “And that,” said O’Brien, started this entire journey.”

Shortly thereafter the SHS was contacted by a group of wooden plane collectors That settled the relationship and connected Jocelyn to the story. Then he heard of the Hilltown Hikers and Giles Tracy’s grave in Blandford and came to discover more gravesites. “Jethro’s buried, right there, next to Giles Tracy.”

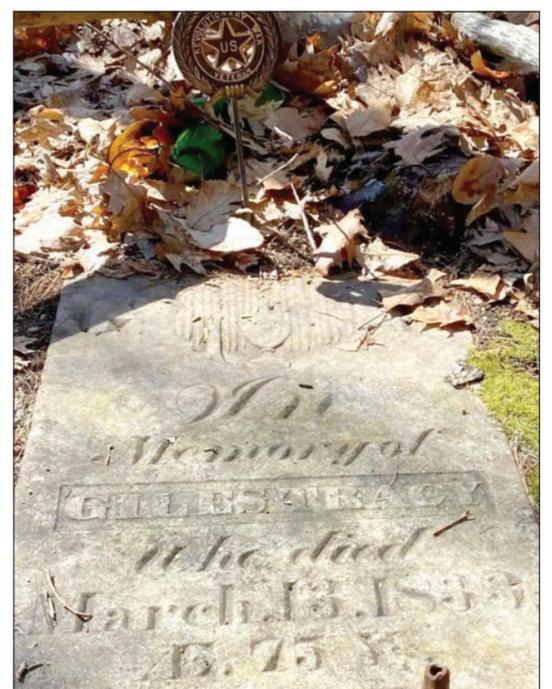
Tracy’s gravestone was actually discovered in 2014 by the Westfield Venture Crew 101 with their advisor Lloyd Martin. Martin is a long-time Scout leader and lives in Blandford.

“By the end of the day,”

said O’Brien, “we uncovered what we believed to be Jethro’s headstone and his family members, at least markers...and (the SHS) was able to say to Jocelyn, this is your relative.” It added a personal touch to the process.

O’Brien went on to explain that a couple of Jethro’s children settled in Sheffield and are mentioned in the town’s census in the early 1800s. Further investigation linked the W.E.B. DuBois lineage with the Piper family, who is now included in Jocelyn’s extended and extensive family.

The SHS has just submitted another Mass Humanities grant to look at the time pre-Elizabeth Freeman up to the very early 1800s to identify enslaved people of Sheffield during and prior to the end of enslavement in Massachusetts. “It’s really narrowing down our focus,” said O’Brien. He enjoys the research and finding “another door to open.”



This is Giles Tracy's gravestone. Jethro Jones is buried next to him. Submitted photo

from page 1

OTIS

Historical Commission presents author's program Nov. 12

OTIS – The Otis Historical Commission and Otis Preservation Trust presents author Gail Gelburd on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 6 p.m. at the Otis Town Library, North Main Road.

This event is in-person only. Gelburd will be discussing her new book “The Liberation of Sue Moody: Slaying the Dragons,” about Otis resident Sue Moody. A short a question and answer session will follow. Admission is free, but registration is required. To register to attend this event or for more information, people may visit www.otispreservationtrust.com; or www.townofotisma.com. Donations are welcome.

The newly released “The Liberation of Sue Moody: Slaying the Dragon” by Gail Gelburd brings to light a life

of grit, war and unbroken spirit. The book is striking a powerful chord with readers who see in Sue Moody's life a rare and unflinching account of courage under relentless pressure. This is not just the story of a journalist's career. It is the chronicle of a woman who endured war, hunger, and the constant threat to her safety, yet refused to lose her voice or her sense of identity.

Drawn from Sue's own letters, journals and articles, the book brings readers into the immediacy of her world. They are with her on the streets of occupied Paris, where she rides her bicycle through narrow alleys to avoid patrols, barter for food in the black market and searches for chestnuts in overgrown gardens when supplies are gone.

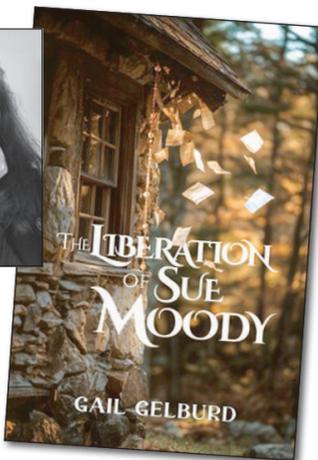
The account unfolds

across the defining events of her life, shifting from her years as a working journalist in the wide landscapes of the American West, to her arrival in Paris on the brink of the Second World War, and into the heart of the German occupation. It moves between Wyoming plains, quiet Massachusetts ponds and the shuttered streets of Paris, showing how opportunity and hardship shaped a woman unwilling to accept the limits others set for her.

The book itself has its own extraordinary origin.



Gail Gelburd



While serving as chair of the Otis Historical Commission, Gail Gelburd reviewed a long-forgotten collection of Sue Moody's writings found by a neighbor in an abandoned Massachusetts home. The

papers were fragile, yet her words remained clear, confident and alive with wit.

“The Liberation of Sue Moody” is both a preservation of history and a deeply human reminder that survival is more than making it through the day. It is the deliberate choice to keep your identity, your beliefs, and your voice alive, no matter how strong the forces working to silence them.

Gail Gelburd has a PhD and has written more than a dozen books, mostly about artists. It is their personal story that has inspired her in each of her manuscripts. She has also been a college professor, museum director and is an artist. More information about Gelburd

may be found at www.gailgelburd.com. Signed copies of the book will be available for purchase at this event and all proceeds will be donated to Otis Preservation Trust.

Otis Preservation Trust works with the Otis Historical Commission to organize and preserve the history and heritage of Otis, for future generations by supporting efforts to preserve, restore, repurpose and educate about buildings, monuments, lands and memorabilia of Otis. OPT is a not-for-profit (501c3) organization operated for fundraising and educational purposes. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

NORTHAMPTON

Community band holds free concert

NORTHAMPTON – The Florence Community Band invites everyone to their free November Notes Concert, on Sunday, Nov. 9 at 2 p.m. in the Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz St. o

This will be an afternoon of music with favorites ranging from Cole Porter,

Pirates of the Caribbean and the hit musical Hamilton. Priscilla M. Ross is the director.

The Florence Community Band was founded on April 18, 2001, with 10 members in attendance at the first rehearsal. It has grown to a membership

roster with over 100 musicians, with an average of 70 band members at rehearsals and performances. The band will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its founding in the spring of 2026. For more information, people may visit www.florencecommunityband.com.

Ceremony to honor service members

NORTHAMPTON – In a heartfelt tribute to honor veterans and their sacrifices, the Betty Allen Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution will host its annual Lawn of Valor Ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 9 at 2 p.m. during Veterans Day weekend.

The public is invited to attend the ceremony on the picturesque lawn of the historic Clapp House, the Betty Allen Chapter's headquarters at 148 South St. The grounds will be adorned with U.S. flags symbolizing unity, remembrance, and gratitude.

Community members are welcome to dedicate flags in honor of specific veterans or DAR patriots, adding a personal touch to this meaningful tradition. To sponsor a flag or learn more, people may visit <https://bettyallenchapterdar.regfox.com/betty-allen-chapter-nsdard-lawn-of-valor> or email BettyAllenChapterHouse@gmail.com.

The program will open with remarks by Chapter Regent Denise Kindschi Gosselin. Attendees will include members of the DAR and SAR (Sons of the American Revolution), veterans, and community dignitaries. A color guard from the SAR Seth Pomeroy Chapter will present the nation's colors, followed by a performance of the National Anthem by Northampton's John F. Kennedy Middle School choral group, the JFKeys.

Chapter members will read the names of current and former service members whose families and friends have sponsored flags displayed on the chapter house lawn. In addition, the Betty Allen Chapter will present

awards to local citizens who have made outstanding contributions to veterans' services, historic preservation, and patriotism.

Attendees are encouraged to bring donations for the chapter's “Giving Tree” in support of the Leeds VA Soldier On program. Requested items include water bottles, twin-size blankets, towels, kitchen utensils, liquid body wash, razors and shaving cream, and assorted batteries. Gift cards to local stores are also appreciated.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution is a nonprofit, nonpolitical women's service organization dedicated to preserving the memory and spirit of those who achieved American independence through historic preservation, education, and patriotism.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Dental assisting program expands

SPRINGFIELD – The Dental Assisting program at Springfield Technical Community College is now accepting applications for the spring 2026 semester.

This marks an opportunity for students to begin their training in either the fall or spring semester of 2026, offering greater flexibility with an afternoon/evening schedule designed to meet the needs of today's students. Applications for the spring 2026 semester opened Sept. 15 and the deadline to apply is Nov. 14. Acceptance letters will be mailed during the first week of December. A mandatory program orientation will be held on Dec. 17 from 9 a.m.-noon, at which time students are required to have their dental kit purchased and paid in full.

“By expanding to both fall and spring starts, we are opening the door for more students who want to pursue a career in dental assisting but may not have been able to wait a full year to apply,” said Samantha Kelley, Program Coordinator for Dental

Assisting. “This change provides additional access and flexibility for students who are eager to join the workforce and contribute to the growing demand for dental professionals.”

The admissions process requires applicants to provide proof of high school graduation or GED/HiSET completion, along with a transcript or test scores. In addition, applicants must have completed or be enrolled in one of the following courses: BIO 120/120L Basics of Anatomy & Physiology or BIO 231/231L Anatomy & Physiology I. A new Program Coursework Requirement Form will also be part of the online application, effective immediately.

Students who have completed preferred courses such as English Composition 1 (ENG 101), General Psychology (PSY 101) or Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101), Fundamentals of Oral Communication (ENG 105), and Nutrition (BIO 115) will be given priority

consideration.

Graduates of the one-year certificate program may also strengthen their applications to STCC's Dental Hygiene program, as some of the core dental assisting courses, such as Dental Radiology, Oral Anatomy I and Dental Materials and Lab, transfer directly into the curriculum.

“The Dental Assisting program at STCC is known for producing highly skilled graduates who are ready to meet the needs of dental practices across the region,” said Christopher Scott, Dean of the School of Health and Patient Simulation.

For more information about the Dental Assisting program and to apply, people may visit stcc.edu.

STCC, the Commonwealth's only technical community college, continues the pioneering legacy of the Springfield Armory with comprehensive and technical education in manufacturing, STEM, health care, business, social services and the liberal arts.

FLORENCE

Florence Bank hires loan officer and branch manager

FLORENCE – The Florence Bank announces it has hired a commercial loan officer and a branch manager.

Xiaolei Hua of South Hadley joined the bank as vice president commercial loan officer, while Shadia Coley of Enfield, Connecticut, has been named branch manager, branch officer of the bank's new Holyoke office set to open in 2026.

Hua has 20 years of banking experience and prior to joining Florence Bank, he held the positions of commercial credit officer, assistant vice president, portfolio manager and vice president, commercial lending. He is skilled in business development, relationship management, financial and credit analysis and underwriting.

In his new role, Hua will develop, manage and deepen client relationships while supporting the bank's strategic growth goals. Hua holds a bachelor's degree in finance from the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a master's in business administration from the same institution. He also attended the New England



Xiaolei Hua



Shadia Coley

School for financial studies at Babson College, which trains banking professionals.

He is a board member and finance and investment committee member for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and a board member and Finance Committee member for Tech Foundry. Hua has also been named a 40 Under 40 by BusinessWest.

Coley has over 10 years of banking experience and previously held the positions of assistant branch manager, business specialist and branch manager. In addition to managing Florence Bank's newest branch, she will oversee community outreach and engagement, team leadership and coaching and customer service.

She holds a bachelor's degree in business admin-

istration from Southern New Hampshire University and a master's in business administration with a concentration in finance, also from SNHU. She sits on the board for Dress for Success Western Massachusetts.

President and CEO Matt Garrity welcomes the bank's newest team members. “Xiaolei and Shadia come to us with a wealth of experience in banking,” said Garrity. “With their prior experience and stellar skillsets, I am confident they will provide exceptional service to Florence Bank's customers.”

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield and Springfield. A Holyoke branch will open in the spring of 2026.

EASTHAMPTON

bankESB honored with top workplaces excellence awards

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB is proud to announce it has been recognized as a Financial Services Industry Top Workplaces award winner and has received three additional Top Workplaces Culture Excellence Awards for Fall 2025: employee appreciation, employee well-being, and professional development.

Presented by Energage, a leading provider of technology-based employee engagement tools, these awards celebrate organizations that excel in fostering exceptional workplace cultures based on employee feedback and engagement. Winners are chosen solely on employee feedback gathered through an anonymous, third-party employee engagement survey, issued by Energage. More than 42,000 organizations across the country were invited to participate

in the survey. Results are calculated by comparing the survey's research-based statements, including 15 culture drivers that are proven to predict high performance against industry benchmarks.

“This recognition is a reflection of our commitment to our people,” said Matthew S. Sosik, president and CEO of bankESB. “We're proud of the culture we have built together, one where appreciation, growth, and well-being are at the center of everything we do.”

The awards highlight organizations that demonstrate a genuine commitment to their employees' success, health, and overall experience. bankESB's achievement across all categories underscores its dedication to creating a workplace where employees feel valued, supported and empowered to grow professionally.

“Earning a Top Workplaces award is a badge of honor for companies, especially because it comes authentically from their employees,” said Eric Rubino, Energage CEO. “That's something to be proud of. In today's market, leaders must ensure they're allowing employees to have a voice and be heard. That's paramount. Top Workplaces do this and it pays dividends.”

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton, Massachusetts. They have 11 branches located throughout Western Massachusetts. The Giving Tree, bankESB and the Easthampton Savings Bank Charitable Foundation support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties.

MIDDLEFIELD

PARANORMAL PODCAST reaches top 3% globally

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

MIDDLEFIELD – Looking to scare yourself a bit as we head into the Halloween weekend?

Middlefield writer and podcaster Patricia Baker along with co-host Patricia Kirkman might have just the answer for you with her weekly paranormal podcast that Apple Podcasts ranks in the top 3% globally. It reaches thousands of devoted listeners each week through YouTube and Rumble, and provides leading-edge conversations with scientists, mystics, authors and experiencers of the extraordinary.

Her podcast, Supernatural Girlz, has covered topics such as ghosts and hauntings, hidden archeology, UFOs and Extra Terrestrial abductions, Mothman, Dogman, Bigfoot, dreams and lucid dreaming, near death experiences, angels, demons, astrology, witchcraft, mediumship, psychic abilities and intuition, trauma release, reincarnation, channelling, and animal communications.

Supernatural Girlz has released over 550 episodes to date and their guests have included Uri Geller (psychic, telekinetic); Patrice Chaplin (daughter-in-law of Charlie Chaplin and author of The Portal and Lucifer's Cradle); Robin Foy (The SCOLE experiments and afterlife investigations); Lon Milo DuQuette (expert in the occult and author of over 20 books); Edd Edwards (also known as "The Alien Brain" and inspiration for the John Travolta movie "Phenomenon"); Joe McMoneagle (retired U. S. Army Chief Warrant Officer, who was involved in remote viewing operations and the classified "Stargate Project")



Patricia Baker



Patricia Kirkman



and Dr. Eben Alexander (neurosurgeon and author of Life After Death).

The podcast is a logical extension of the things Baker has experienced throughout her life. "It's been a part of my life forever, since I was a child. I was always comfortable with the unknown," Baker recalled. Early on, she noticed that talking about such things made the adults in her life uncomfortable so she kept most of it to herself. "I was always intuitive and psychic, and I could speak with people who had passed," Baker said, adding that she has had a pretty wide variety of paranormal experiences.

Baker is also a writer, public relations executive, producer and Vice President of Big Picture Agency, Inc., a creative development firm specializing in media, publishing and visionary storytelling.

She earned both her

Bachelor's and Master's degrees in sociology in just four years from Boston College. She reports that early in her career, she immersed herself in the study of consciousness and symbolism and trained extensively in dream analysis and counseling. Over two decades, she led dynamic dream and transformation groups for women, men and teens while maintaining a private practice that bridged psychology, spirituality and the metaphysical for the benefit of her clients.

She says her curiosity for the unseen and unexplained led her to work with Robert Monroe, founder of the world-renowned Monroe Institute, an education center for the study of human consciousness. She also trained with Native American medicine men and women, deepening her insight into energy, intuition and spiritual traditions.

In 2012, Baker was invited by psychic medium Helene Olsen to co-host Angels' Lighthouse, a pioneering broadcast on spirituality and the paranormal. A year later, they rebranded and relaunched the show as Supernatural Girlz-Where Paranormal is Normal. Olsen passed away shortly after the new program started. Currently, world renowned numerologist Patricia Kirkman serves as Baker's co-host.

Kirkman has authored several books including "A Complete Idiot's Guide to Numerology" and has a new book coming out in 2026. Baker's book, "A Supernatural Life," will also be released next year. Supernatural Girlz has a Facebook page, which announces the podcast topic and guest each week.

Back to the spooky stuff, the scariest experience Baker ever had was also kind of funny and Baker refers to it as "the medium and the devil's head." Once Baker had a medium on the show, who was recovering from pneumonia. Baker said she kept hearing a squeaky chair coming over the medium's microphone. Baker suggested she change chairs, but the medium told her that her chair wasn't squeaking. Baker then asked the "visitor" to knock it off and the sound stopped. At the end of the show, Baker took a picture of the medium and discovered a devil's head peering over her shoulder. In Baker's opinion, this happened due to the illness. "When you're not feeling physically well, you are open to things you don't want to be open to," Baker said. "This is why it is sometimes good to do things in a group. At a minimum, it's best to only do these things when you are physically well."

Baker served as an investigator on a famous paranormal case involving Betty Andreasson Luca, her husband Bob and their family involving an alien abduction from their Massachusetts home. Ray Fowler's book about the incident was "The Andreasson Affair: A True Story of a Close Encounter of the Fourth Kind," which became a New York Times best seller. Baker and Fowler, and other team members, investigated Betty's 1967

experience involving aliens coming into her home and taking her aboard their spaceship.

It was fascinating, Baker said, because the Government was also tracking and harassing the family throughout the investigation. Baker herself had helicopters over her own home while working on the investigation. Baker said it is one of the best-documented ET encounters on record. Fowler told her he had been very impressed with Betty's honesty, integrity, strong faith and belief in Jesus and God.

Becky Andreasson, Betty's daughter, became Baker's co-host after Helene Olsen died. "She could capture orbs like nobody else," Baker said. "She was a very talented psychic medium. Baker has copies of Andreasson's orb photos, one of which was shaped exactly like angel wings.

Other episodes featured Robin Foy, a member of the SCOLE Experimental Group in England that conducted a five-year study of human interaction with the paranormal. Noted astrologer William Stickevers discussed the state of conflict throughout the world, but reassured listeners that this will pass and a calmer period will follow.

Baker said there is a lot going on in the paranormal fields currently and hot topics right now are related to UFOs and physical health. They've had military people, who have said that we will never be told what's really going on with UFOs. And they have also featured health practitioners who are on the forefront of new breakthroughs, such as Dr. Garth Nicholson's discovery of Gulf War Syndrome or Markus Klotz at the Apheresis Center and their new treatments for Long COVID.

Despite the global reach of her guests and her podcast, there's a lot happening locally. "These hilltowns are a hotbed of activity," Baker said matter-of-factly. A number of people have seen and photographed orbs, which experts believe are signs of aliens. Baker herself captured a number of orb photos on her outdoor trail cam, with no source of light to explain them. Reported encounters with Bigfoot are increasing. One of the people she interviewed does grids of fault lines and discovered eight in Middlefield, below ancient Cambrian rock in the area. He told Baker that they can be a source of conflict for those who don't know how to manage the energy they produce.

Talking about these things wasn't "done" during Baker's childhood. She said she's pleased to see people now able to come together for conferences and workshops and feel safe to talk about things like this. "They deserve a safe space and not being made fun of," Baker said. "It shows people a different way to be in the world," she said.

Baker invites people to give Supernatural Girlz a try. The show airs on Tuesdays from 8-9 p.m. on YouTube (Supernatural Girlz Radio) and Rumble. You can find more information on the KGRA network (KGRAdd.com) including past episodes. People should feel welcome to call in and take part when live readings are taking place. "The guests have a good time, it's a fun show," Baker said. "The audience makes up their own mind."

"I really feel honored to have met the people that I've met. I admire their courage and ability to speak about what they've gone through."

STOCKBRIDGE

Main Street at Christmas to take place on Dec. 7

STOCKBRIDGE – The Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas Recreation will take place Sunday, Dec. 7 from noon-2 p.m.

Participants will see Main Street as Norman Rockwell did when he painted the famous Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas. Main Street becomes a magical New England village with over 25 antique cars parked along the street, weather permitting and a full range of festive activities to delight the child in everyone.

People may shop for special Rockwell gifts at the Norman Rockwell Museum Pop-up Shop. They will hear holiday music by the Victorian Carolers and the talented students from Monument Mountain Regional High School. They may dine for food and seasonal beverages at the Red Lion Inn courtyard pop-

up and Great Cape Baking Co. food booth. Children may have their face painted and enjoy stories and crafts and magical visits with Santa, Mrs. Claus and their Reindeer sheep. Tickets are \$5 per person with children under 12 free. Horse drawn wagon rides by Clay Hill Farm will also be available for an additional fee on the day; heavy rain will cancel rides.

Tickets may only be purchased in advance by visiting the Stockbridge Chamber of website at www.stockbridgechamber.org.

On Sunday, Dec. 7 there is no parking on Main Street to 2 p.m. On Street Parking is available West and East of Main Street block where marked and at Marions on Eden Hill parking lot, 2 Prospect Hill Road. A shuttle service is available at the Eden Hill Parking Lot from 11a.m.-2:30 p.m.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

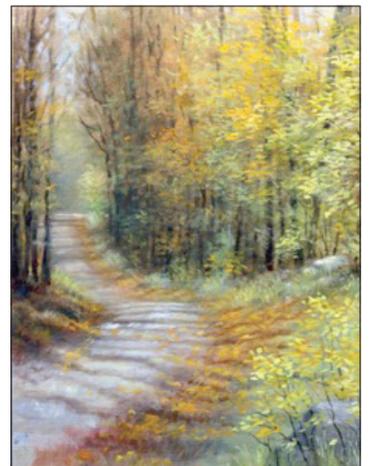
PLAINFIELD



This is an actual photo of the scene painted by Michael Melle and Larry Preston.



This is another painting of a plein air landscape. Photos courtesy of Melle and Preston



This is an example of a plein air landscape done over the past two years.

Library hosts plein air artist show

PLAINFIELD – Michael Melle and Larry Preston, Plainfield artists, have been meeting together each week for two years at outdoor locations to paint landscapes.

They will have a show of their plein air (outdoors) landscapes at the Shaw Memorial Library, 312 Main St. On Saturday, Nov. 1 at

10:30 a.m. there will be an artists talk. The show will be open during library hours, Saturdays from 9 a.m.-noon, Tuesdays from 2-8 p.m. and Thursdays, from 5-8 p.m. during the months of November and December.

Melle is a well-known Hilltown hay sculptor. His hay and stick figures have been exhibited all over

Hampshire and Berkshire Counties. He is also a fine artist, having majored in studio art at UMass Amherst. His recent work in landscape painting harkens to earlier landscapes, although his work is primarily in a surrealist style.

Preston is a nationally-known oil painter, who creates still life in a realistic

style. His works are sold in galleries from Northampton to South Carolina. Prior to being a working artist, Larry was a musician, playing in all-original rock bands all over the east coast.

Arts at Shaw Memorial Library is supported by the Cultural Councils of Plainfield, Cummington and Worthington.

WESTFIELD

Second annual tractor parade happens Nov. 22

WESTFIELD – On Saturday, Nov. 22 at 5 p.m. Wyben's second annual lighted tractor parade will take place starting at 542 Montgomery Road.

Weather date is Sunday, Nov. 23 at 5 p.m. Wyben

is an area of Westfield. Tractors start at junction of Montgomery Road and West Road and end up at Wyben Union Chapel, 678 Montgomery Road. The parade consists of illuminated tractor with working lights.

Attached lighted floats are not allowed. No person on foot, lawn tractors or quads are allowed. Spectators are asked to stay out of the road for safety. No throwing of candy or cheese will be allowed.

Children should be on

the lookout for a special visitor, who will be passing out goody bags to the well-behaved children. Parking will be limited near Wyben Chapel due to needed space for tractor to safely turn around and park.



DEATH NOTICE

MURPHY, KAY. F.

Died Sept. 23, 2025
 Celebration of Life at 2 at 1 p.m.
 Chester Train Station, Chester
 Burial will be at the convenience of the family in York,
 Pennsylvania

Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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

OBITUARY

Kay F. Murphy, 81

CHESTER – Kay Murphy was born to Rollin J. and Averene S. Murphy of York, Pennsylvania on April 20, 1944. She passed away on Sept. 23, 2025 in Holyoke.

She attended Mercy Adult Day Health in Westfield, Multi Cultural Community Services and also Sunshine Village in Agawam.

She leaves her only

sibling, Terry L. Murphy of Chester with whom she resided. She leaves several family members and friends who loved her.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Nov. 2 at 1 p.m. in the Chester Train Station. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in York, Pennsylvania.

Graham Funeral Home, Easthampton, assisted the family.

REGION

Sen. John Velis donates to student trooper program



John Velis

SPRINGFIELD – On Friday, Sept. 26 Senator John C. Velis joined members of the Massachusetts State Police and the Massachusetts American Legion to present a donation to support a scholarship for several men and women to be able to participate in the Student Trooper Program.

For over 35 years the American Legion has sponsored the Student Trooper program to provide the opportunity for young people between the ages of 15 and 17 to gain a better understanding of the difficult work of law enforcement. The program teaches students about how to administer first aide, criminal law, officer safety, and participate in demonstration by state police specialty units include tactical teams and K-9 unit.

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
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- 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

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
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56					57			58					
59					60			61					
62					63					64			

CLUES ACROSS

1. El __, Texas town
5. Rocker's tool
8. A lot
12. Traveling by ground
14. Spelling competition
15. Two-toed sloth
16. Small perfumed bag
18. "Much __ about nothing"
19. Tough-skinned mollusk
20. Removes from record
21. It warms the planet
22. Leafy green
23. Quality of arriving favorably
26. Living thing
30. "Six of Crows" author Bardugo
31. Got around a rule
32. Resin from burned substance
33. Iraq seaport

34. Religious leaders
39. Fugitives are on it
42. Samson's influencer
44. Italian city
46. A quality of lacking interest
47. Predatory tropical fishes
49. Nobel physician Isodor
50. Luck
51. Stationary part of a motor or generator
56. Orthopedic professional group (abbr.)
57. One point south of due east
58. It follows 79
59. Paper currency
60. Anger
61. Spanish seaport
62. Sleep in a rough place

CLUES DOWN

1. Bullfighting maneuver
2. From a distance
3. Soul and calypso song
4. Expressions of delight
5. Lower in esteem
6. Inner region of an organ
7. Flowers
8. A bog
9. Remove a fastening
10. Membranes
11. Enormous
13. One who abstains from drink
17. Malayan wild ox
24. Type of student
25. Rejecting all moral principles
26. Sino-Soviet block
27. Egyptian unit of weight
28. Wrong
29. Make a mistake
35. Indicates location
36. Boxing's "GOAT"
37. Where wrestlers compete
38. Timid
40. Disney town
41. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
42. Male parent
43. Remove for good
44. Simple shoes
45. Flowers
47. Hindi courtesy title for a man
48. Not pleased
49. "Atlas Shrugged" author
52. CIA officer and writer
53. Hoodlum
54. __ Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor
55. Woolen rugs

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Your passion is ignited this week, Aries. A fun hobby might capture your full attention. Don't be afraid to try something new or put your energy into something you really love.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Harmony and warmth are abundant in your home right now, Cancer. This is the ideal week to strengthen bonds with family and loved ones. Think about making a homecooked meal.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Your diplomatic and charming nature will help you navigate social situations with ease. In fact, new relationships could be the highlight of your week.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, this week a professional goal you have been working on will finally reach a breakthrough. Stay focused and disciplined, and you will find yourself achieving a great deal.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

This is a great time to focus on the simple pleasures in life. Enjoy a cozy night in or savor a delicious meal. Spend time in nature

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Your natural charisma is shining, making this the ideal week to express yourself or take on a leadership role. Your enthusiasm may lead others to be on your team.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

An opportunity for insightful self-reflection and personal growth comes your way, Scorpio. Get ready to let go of old habits and embrace a new, more confident version of yourself.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

A new idea that you share this week could gain traction and lead to an exciting collaboration, Aquarius. Your forward-thinking outlook is a valuable gift that others will appreciate.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21

Gemini, you may find yourself drawn to new subjects and interesting people this week. It's an excellent time for reading a book outside of your typical genre or learning a new skill.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

Time to tackle any organizational ideas that you have had on your mind. Even if you handle small projects around the house or elsewhere, you'll create calm and exercise control.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, adventure is calling your name this week and you will feel a strong urge to explore. Perhaps planning a trip or trying a new activity can fill the urge?

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, your intuition is at an all-time high. Trust your gut, especially when it comes to creative or personal decisions. Nothing is out of reach for you right now.

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

SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:

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

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

answers

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

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

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MONTGOMERY

Music in Montgomery lists November lineup

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

MONTGOMERY – Music will be offered on three of November’s four Thursday afternoons; the stage will be dark on Thanksgiving in the Montgomery Town Hall, 161 Main Road.

Featured this month are We Three, Larry Southard and Jerry and Kara Noble. Opening the series on Thursday, Nov. 6 is “We Three,” who are Barry Searle (guitar and vocals), Sarah Miller (percussion and vocals) and Pete Rzasz (vocals, pedal steel and har-

monica), who perform a variety of musical styles. The three are regular performers in Montgomery; Searle and Miller have also been performing with Ravenwood and Searle is part of the Wolf Hill Band, which performed from his 2025 album “The Awakening” at the Big E this fall.

Singer, guitarist Larry Southard will perform on Thursday, Nov. 13. Whether you see him as a solo artist here or at the Memory Cafe in Huntington, or with Papa and Friends who include Lesley Friedman Rosenthal (violin, harmony), Terry AlaBery (Terrance Hall on

drums), Mike Patoniac (bass and harmonica) and Andy Gordon (pedal steel and banjo), the audience is in for a treat. Papa and Friends have been seen at the Knox Trail Inn and previously at Chester Common Table.

Rounding out the month will be Jerry and Kara Noble on Thursday, Nov. 20. Jerry is a pianist, guitarist and composer and his wife Kara plays bass, really well. They donated their time and talent in the hilltowns recently at the Empty Bowls benefits for the Huntington Food Pantry at the Pioneer Valley Assembly of God Church.

Due to the Thanksgiving

holiday, there will be no performance on Nov. 27. This series is co-hosted by the Montgomery Public Library and by Gray Catbird Pottery Studio. Attendees are invited to bring baked goods to share. Donations are accepted for the refreshments with money split between the Montgomery Volunteer Firemen’s Association and the Town Library. Donations are also accepted to tip and thank the fabulous musicians, who perform each week.

This event is open to all, who are interested. For more information, people may call Dale Rogers at 413-875-5205.



Jerry and Kara Noble will perform at Music in Montgomery on Thursday, Nov. 20. *File photo*

CHESTER



The Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., Chester recently held an intrinsic movement event for children with Laurel Lenski. Children play a game with a ball with Laurel Lenski.



Laurel Lenski and a friend are all smiles.

Submitted photos



Laurel Lenski, far right, does an activity with children at the Hamilton Memorial Library.

Hamilton library holds intrinsic movement class

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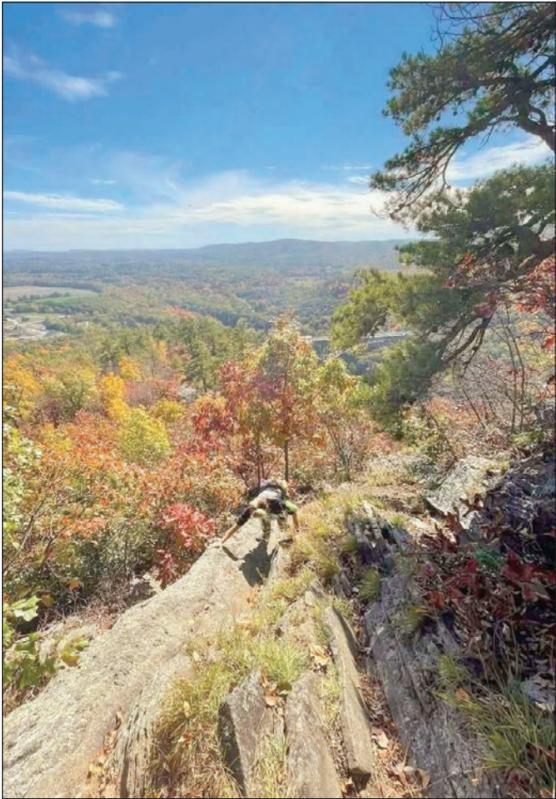
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Name _____

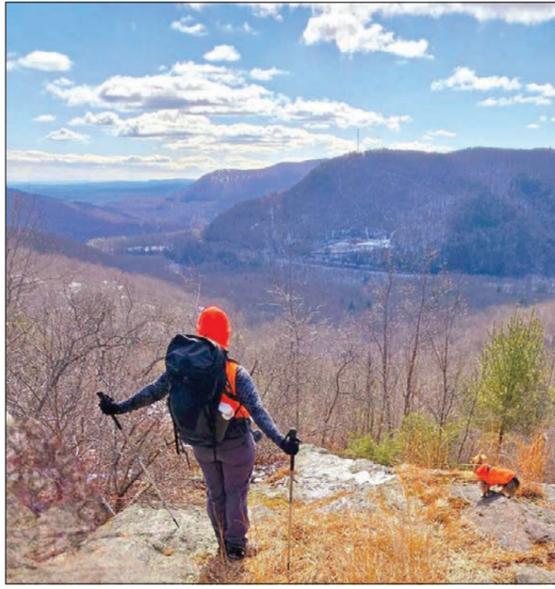
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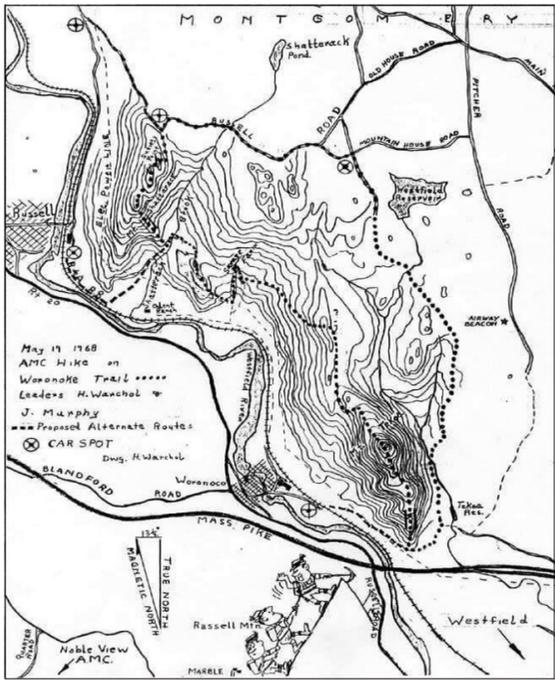
HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Liz took the steep climb of Rattlesnake humps on Tekoa after avoiding this section of years because of her fear of height.



This is arguably the best views in Hampden county over the Westfield River Valley.



This is an original map drawing by Murphy and Warchol.



Red yarn was used to blaze the trail when paint ran out in some sections. Some of the yarn can still be found in dirt. We tied it back on the tree. *Submitted photos*

Hiker follow Unkamit's path

This past week the Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers learned of the passing of two trailblazers, who have been hiking the Hilltown for a very long time.

In the 1960s two men from Westfield set out on a journey heading West to a native footpath across the Hilltowns called Unkamit's Path.

Most of the path runs through public property to connect the New England Trail to the Appalachian Trail. It is a great route. However Henry Warchol and John Murphy did not officially sanction the route. It was 1960 and not as much politics.

Today the non-profit group Highlands Footpath founded about 15 years ago by the Hilltown hiker, who including Elizabeth Massa, has been officially designating this route with some variations as seen at

the Chester Blandford State Forest and Round Top Hill in Chester.

The photos of red yarn on the trail are where the white paint ran out, so red yarn was used to blaze. If you are lucky, you may still find some. We had the pleasure of hiking a section in Chester with John Murphy's daughter years ago, who told of tales of hiking and camping overnight in the hills.

The most beautiful sections of Westfield, Russell, Huntington, Chester and Becket were traveled including many sections that most have never hiked.

Today, this footpath is a tribute to these two legends and the Hilltown History that many may not know, however those who do treasure it fondly. A complete CD exists with all the maps and notes and is proudly part of the Hilltown Hikers Collection. John and Hank, you will be missed and honored forever.



Shatterack Mountain in Russel has plenty of rocky outcroppings.



Greg and Russ take in the glorious views from Tekoa Mountain in Montgomery.



A section of the trail passes Russell transfer station on Frog Hollow Road.



An iconic oak stands on Round Hill in Chester.

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