"The thankful receiver bears a plentiful harvest." – William Blake

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Ashfield, Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Dalton, Easthampton, Florence, Goshen, Granville, Hawley, Haydenville, Hinsdale, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Peru, Plainfield, Russell, Southampton, Washington, Westfield, Westhampton, Windsor, Williamsburg, Worthington

A **TURLEY** PUBLICATION ❙ www.turley.com

November 19, 2026 ❙ Vol. 48, No. 30 ❙ 75¢ www.countryjournal.turley.com

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Jennings named Gateway principal

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

For as long as most staff can remember, new principals hired for Gateway Regional School, formerly Gateway Regional High School, have been chosen from outside the district.

This time, Gateway chose one of their own for their newest principal, who officially started in her new role on Nov. 12.



Alexandra Jennings

Alexandra "Lexie" Jennings came to Gateway as a first year teacher ten years ago, after earning her B.A. in history and Master's in Secondary Education from UMASS, Amherst.

She taught a wide variety of courses including U.S. History I, World History, Art History, Contemporary Issues, Sociology, and American Government. In 2025, she earned her Administrator License through the Administrative Internship Program.

In August of this year, she was named Gateway Regional School's Instructional Coach. "In this position, I have had the privilege of partnering with both new and veteran educators to strengthen classroom practices, support the implementation of our Instructional Model, and guide the implementation of new high-quality instructional materials across multiple levels," Jennings said, adding that she found this work to be deeply rewarding.

It was a brief but

PRINCIPAL, page 8

WESTFIELD

Littleville Elementary School honors veterans

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

On Tuesday afternoon on Nov. 10, students at Littleville Elementary School had the opportunity to speak with 16 veterans about their experiences in the military. Veterans and active military personnel were invited and many who attended had children or grandchildren in the school.

Kimberly Devine-Coyne, a 27-year active member of the Air Force, was a parent who attended. She has been stationed with the Air National Guard at Barnes for the past 6 years where she is Commander for the Security Forces there. She visited her daughter Harlow's classroom for the event.

Teacher Shawn Thayer had prepared her students ahead of time by having the group of third graders list questions they could ask of a military person. To avoid having hands waving in Devine-Coyne's face, Thayer drew

VETERANS, page 9



Turley Publications Photos by Wendy Long

Littleville third grader Harlow Coyne and her mother, Kimberly Devine-Coyne visited Harper's classroom on Nov. 10, spoke about her military experience and answered students' questions during the school's Veterans Day program. Devine-Coyne is a Commander for the Security Forces in the Air National Guard at Barnes.

CHESTER

Chester Theater wins 'Berkie' award

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

CHESTER – Shannon Lamb, star of the play "Fannie: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer," won the award for Outstanding Solo Performance at the 10th Annual Berkshire Theatre Awards held on Monday, Nov. 9 at the Tina Packer Playhouse in Lenox.

Dubbed "Berkies," the award is granted by the Berkshire Theatre Critics Association for performances in the Berkshires and surrounding area held between Oct. 1, 2025 and Sept. 30, 2026. "Fannie" ran at the Chester Theatre Company last summer from July 2 - 12.

It is a one-woman musical written by Cheryl L. West and was directed by Lamb's husband, Gilbert McCauley.

In an interview two days later, Lamb said, "To do the show was literally the hardest thing I've ever had to do professionally. I've done a lot of intense rolls, a particularly dark one in "Little Rock 9."

"In reading the play and learning more about Mrs. Hamer, I was just floored that one woman could still stand after living that. And honored that I got to tell her story. Even after she went through what she went through, her conviction was even stronger. I don't know if I could have done that. But I felt I had to tell her story honestly. I couldn't cut corners when it was uncomfortable, to honor her."

"Little Rock 9" is a play about the first African American students to enter Little Rock's Central High School in 1957. She said both plays took her to a very dark place. She credited everyone on CTC's staff for creating an environment where she felt supported and safe to portray Fannie.

The play is a tribute to Fannie Lou Hamer, a voting, civil and women''s rights activist in Mississippi in the 1960s and 70s. Among her many accomplishments were representing the Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention and organizing Mississippi's "Freedom Summer" that same year to register African American voters in the state-a ten-week effort that resulted in beatings, homes and churches being burned and the murder of four civil rights workers.

She was also the Co-Founder of the National Women's Political Caucus. President Joe Biden posthumously awarded Hamer the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2025.

"We cannot take it for granted," Lamb said, as she shared an anecdote about her daughter turning 18 this year. Her daughter was hesitant

THEATER, page 9



Submitted photo

Berkie awardee Shannon Lamb with the play's director and her husband, Gilbert McCauley, at the May 9 awards ceremony at the Tina Packer Playhouse in Lenox. Lamb won for Best Solo Performance for her title role in "Fannie: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer" at the Chester Theatre Company last summer.

BLANDFORD

Board hear highway workers concerns

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The entire Highway Department met with the Select Board Monday, Nov. 9 primarily to discuss why sick time and vacation time accruals were not appearing on the individual pay stubs.

Heretofore, the board had spoken with the treasurer Sarah Hunter, who handles payroll and had been assured that the accrual time would be fixed in July, but it was not.

The board has again taken the issue to Hunter and has been told it will be fixed to be accurate.

That was the only resolution that came out of their meeting.

The Highway Department, specifically Ryan Keach, was not pleased with the wage scale. He was referring to the wage scale as developed by the union, which was a contracted item. The town no longer has union members and the contract is no longer pertinent.

The concern about the cost of Commercial Drivers License came up again. This had been discussed at earlier board meetings, but was on the department's employees list of issues.

The discussion, sometimes heated, was an hour-long hashing and re-hashing of payroll and wages.

Resignations

In other business, several resignations were announced, among them the town's Conservation Agent Sabrina Pooler, who will move on to a position as Circuit Rider with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for the Western Region. Her last day is Dec. 4.

Greg Garfield and Scott O'Connor have resigned from the Planning Board. A formal resignation letter from Garfield had not been received, but he is stepping down and his letter is forthcoming.

If the remaining members of the Planning Board do not have replacements to present to the Select Board for consideration – both boards have to vote approval – then the Select Board will appoint someone to fill those seats.

Land clearing

Chair of the Community Development Coordination Group Corinne Shartrand told the board that they were suggesting fines, or fees for

BOARD, page 7



Blandford.....6, 7
Business Directory.....3
Chester.....9
Classifieds.....10
Goshen.....11, 12
Haydenville.....2
Hilltowns.....2
Huntington.....3
Obituaries.....8
Opinion.....4, 5
Public Notices.....7
Puzzle Page.....11
Plainfield.....9
Russell.....3
Schools & Youth.....8
Westfield.....9
Worthington.....3

8 04879 13178 6

HILLTOWNS

Hilltown holiday events schedule

SATURDAY, NOV. 21

BECKET
First Congregational Church of Becket, 22 YMCA Road
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Holiday crisp fundraiser – apple, blueberry, strawberry rhubarb, blueberry rhubarb and plain rhubarb - $15 each call 413-623-8300 or email blueberryledge@gmail.com to reserve choices.

HAYDENVILLE
Haydenville Congregational Church, 143 Main St., Rte. 9
10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Autumn soup and bake sale – wide variety of soups, stews, chili and mac and cheese, all packaged in Earth-friendly containers and range of baked goods including world-class pies, cakes, breads, cookies, quick breads and muffins. The church will also be selling their unique tee-shirts and handmade aprons.

A portion of the proceeds will go to support the Western Massachusetts Food Bank. Items left from the sale will be sold Sunday following worship service, around 11:30 a.m.

WESTFIELD
Third Annual Wyben Lighted Christmas Tractor Parade
5 p.m. start

New for 2026 is the contest for lighted tractors. The contest committee will be located at 670 Montgomery Road, seated on a trailer and will be judging based on the whoa factor, craftsmanship and creativity. Winners will be announced on Wyben Association facebook page the next day. Sign-ups for the contest will be at the start of the parade. Each participant will share their name, number and email address and then will receive a number to place on their tractor.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25

WORTHINGTON
First Congregational Church, 159 Huntington Road
1-4 p.m.

Thanksgiving pre-order pie and bake sale

Pies must be pre-ordered by Thursday, Nov. 19 and returned to the church's drop box with payment and type and number of pies ordered and include name, phone number and email address. Pies are $20 each. Pie selection include apple, apple with crumb topping, pecan, pumpkin and chocolate cream. People should pick up their pie order today. Other baked items will be available for purchase on Wednesday, Nov. 25 from 1- 4 p.m. or until all baked goods are sold. People should come early.

SATURDAY, DEC. 5

STOCKBRIDGE
Holiday Marketplace
Berkshire Botanical Garden, 5 West Stockbridge Road
10 a.m.-4 p.m. (Dec. 5 and 6)

The two-day event will showcase more than 100 premier artisan vendors from across the region, along with a curated selection of holiday botanical designs and seasonal activities.

Attendees can shop a wide array of holiday décor and gifts, including one-of-a-kind designer wreaths; holiday-blooming amaryllis and paper whites in custom decorative and clay containers

WESTFIELD
Christmas Craft Fair
Wyben Union Church, 678 Montgomery Road
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Variety of handcrafted treasures, local 4-H Club fresh evergreen wreaths, corn chowder luncheon, baked goods table.

All proceeds from the church's kitchen, baked goods, and raffle will benefit the Westfield Food Pantry.

SATURDAY, DEC. 12

RUSSELL
Holiday Parade of Lights
Russell Fire Department to Russell Town Hall, 65 Main St., Rte. 20
4-6 p.m. plus

4-5 p.m. musician Tim Van Egmond at Town Hall, 65 Main St. from 4-5 p.m.

The Russell/Montgomery Police give Santa a police escort beginning at the Fire Department headquarters starting at 4:30 p.m. with a blue light convoy to the Russell Town Hall.

4:45 Santa arrives arrive at Town Hall hot chocolate and popcorn available outside Town Hall

6 p.m. parade

The parade kicks off at 6 p.m. from the Russell Fire Department headquarters to the Town Hall. The route follows Main Street (Rte. 20).

There is no parking along the parade route. The Catholic Church will be accessible for parking. Limited handicap parking will be offered at the Post Office parking lot.



MassDOT announces upcoming I-90 bridge work

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces daytime bridge painting and tree trimming on I-90 eastbound and westbound in the towns of Stockbridge, Becket and Lee.

All work is weather dependent and will take place at the following locations and times:

In Stockbridge, bridge painting will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 6.4 now through Friday, Nov. 20, from 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

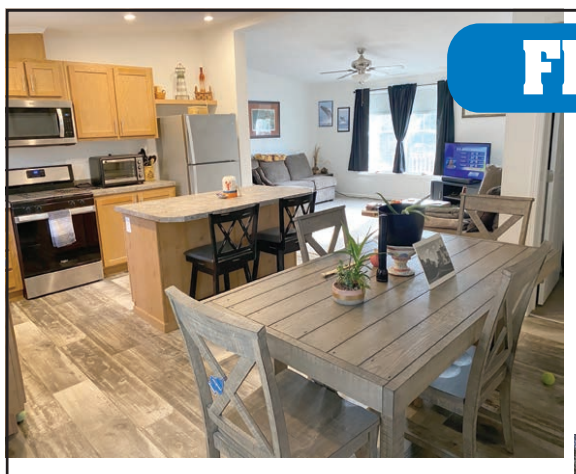
In Becket and Lee, tree trimming will be conducted on I-90 westbound from mile marker 14.8 to mile marker 12.0 on Thursday, Nov. 19 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

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

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

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

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



ST. JUDE'S NOVENA

May The Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now, and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, Helper of the Hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer 9 times a day. By the 8th day your prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.

Thank you St. Jude, for granting my petition.

C.D.

HAYDENVILLE

Church hosts soup and bake sale Nov. 21

HAYDENVILLE – The annual autumn soup and bake sale takes place on Saturday, Nov. 21 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Haydenville Congregational Church, 143 Main St., Rte. 9.

On sale will be a wide variety of soups, stews, chili, and mac and cheese, all packaged in Earth-friendly containers that are ready to be heated up or kept frozen for later.

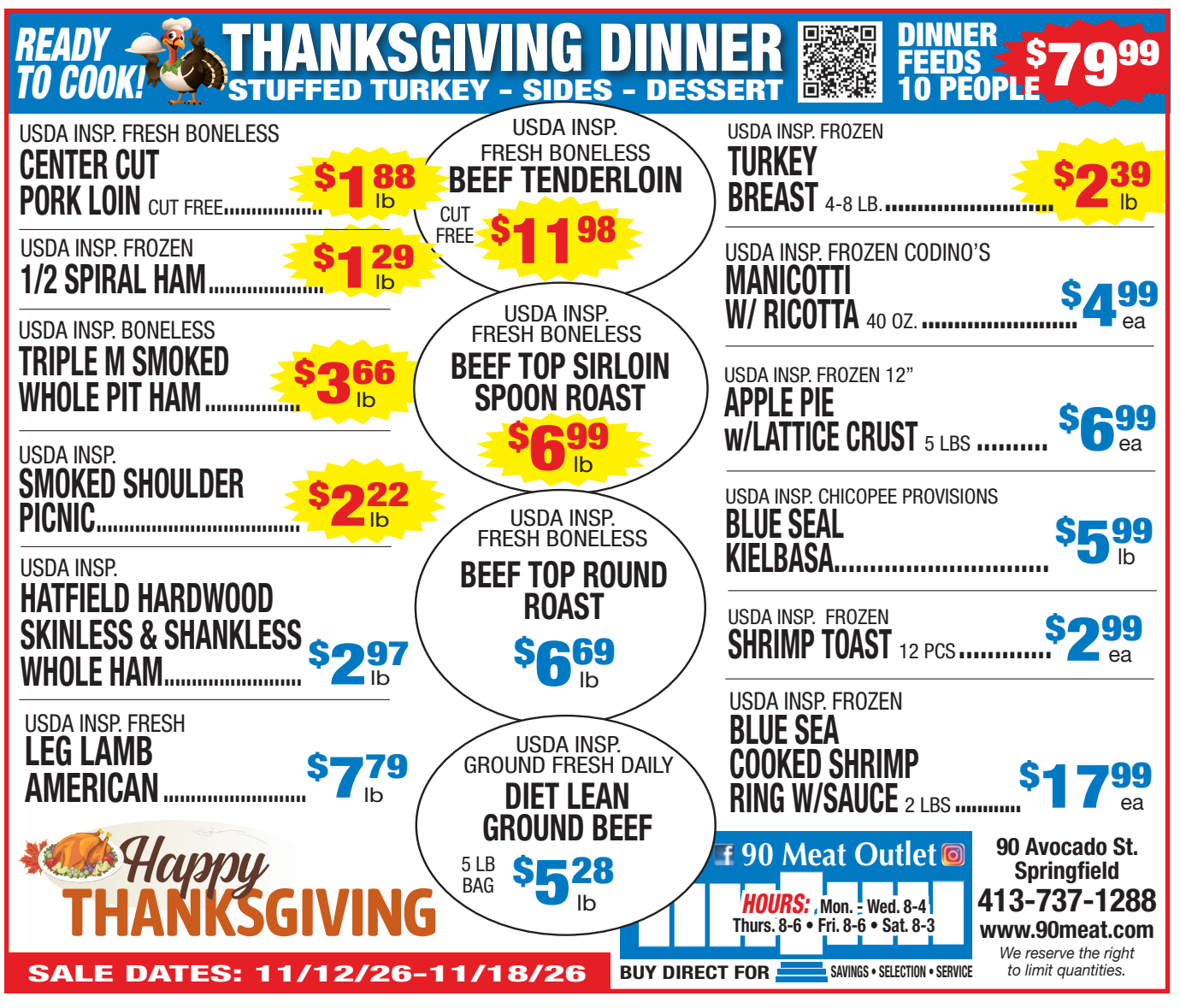
There will also be a wide range of baked goods including world-class pies, cakes, breads, cookies, quick breads and muffins. The church will also be selling their unique tee-shirts and handmade aprons.

A portion of the proceeds will go to support the Western Massachusetts Food Bank. Items left from the sale will be sold Sunday following worship service, around 11:30 a.m.

According to sale organizer Megan Jewett, "Over the years the HCC autumn soup and bake sale has grown in popularity as people stock up on pies and treats for Thanksgiving guests and cozy soups and stews for these chilly nights when you just don't feel like cooking."

NOTICE

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



Public AuctioN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH Starting at 11:00 A.M.

MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE
• CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS •

★ (2) PARCELS/ (1) LOCATION ★
• 1½ STORY SINGLE FAMILY HOME •
• ±2¼ ACRE VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT •

92 Old State Road & 0 Old State Road Chester, MA
To be sold on the Premises

92 OLD STATE ROAD - 11:00 A.M.
• 2-Story Single Family Home • ±5 1/3 Acres of Land •
• Total of (6) Rooms w/ (3) Bedrooms & (1½) Baths •
• ±1,540 S/F of Living Area • Hot Water Heat • Full Basement •
• Private Well & Septic • Zoned: AR • Parcel ID: 414-0-21.1 •
★ Two Car Detached Barn ★
0 OLD STATE ROAD – Immediately Following
• ±2¼ Acre Vacant Residential Lot • ±348 Ft. Frontage on Old State Road •
• Private Well • Septic Required • Roughed-In Driveway •
• Zoned: AR • Parcel ID: 414-0-21.3 •

Inspection: Morning of Sale - 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Sale Per Order of Mortgagee
Attorney David A. Lavenburg
Of the Firm of Bacon Wilson, P.C.
33 State Street, Springfield, MA
Terms Of Sale:
Entirety: $20,000.00 Initial Deposit Cash, Bank or Certified Funds.
Individually: $10,000.00 Initial Deposit Cash, Bank or Certified Funds.
Deposit to be Increased To 10% of Purchase Price Within 5 Business Days.
5% Buyer's Premium, per property, Applies.
Other Terms to be Announced at Time of Sale.

Aaron Posnik
AUCTIONEERS - APPRAISERS
West Springfield, MA • Philadelphia, PA
413-733-5238 • 610-853-6655
TOLL FREE 1-877-POSNIK-1 (767-6451)
MA Auc. Lic. #161 • PA Auc. Lic. #AY000241L
www.posnik.com • E-mail: info@posnik.com