

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." — Norman Vincent Peale

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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HUNTINGTON

Fourth continuance hearing on gravel pit

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

Thirty three people attended the fourth continuance hearing on the Hull Forestlands application for a gravel pit on 4.9 acres in Huntington, on land located between the Westfield River and Goss Hill Road.

Zoning Board of Appeals Chair Karon Hathaway called the Tuesday, Nov. 12 meeting to order at Stanton Hall at 6 p.m. Present for the ZBA were Hathaway, Victoria Minella-Sena and alternates, Jill Rose and Deresa Helems. William Hull was present as was his attorney, Michael Pill. Dennis Nolt was there to represent Hilltown Sand and Gravel; if the permit is approved, his business would operate the gravel operation.

Hathaway welcomed people and said the ZBA has been working on getting proposals from consultants to do the nine studies proposed at the first public hearing, which was held May 14. She announced that they've received several applications regarding a noise study, but they have not determined which one to present to Hull. Hull Forestlands will bear the cost of the studies, as part of their due diligence on the project. As a result, the ZBA asked for another continuance and proposed meeting again on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025 at 6 p.m. for the next hearing. Pill agreed to the date and time and signed required paperwork authorizing the next hearing.

Hathaway thanked everyone for coming out, noting that this is an important matter for the town. ZBA and the Planning Board have been working on and reviewing the study proposals. They have also received one proposal for a traffic study that was sent back as it had a couple of pieces missing. David Haines of Haines Hydrogeologic Consulting is expected to sub-

HEARING, page 3

BLANDFORD



Ray Hultay and Andrew Shannon assist Fire Chief Adam Dolby with his Scott Air Pack. It was necessary for entering the garage.

Turley photos by Mary Kronholm

Firefighters save property on Main Street

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent



Mark Boomsma hosing down smoking embers.



Ray Hultay works to keep the hose positioned.



The scene the Davenport's came home to on Saturday night, Nov. 16.

The night after the fourth and final Super Moon of the year, the Beaver Moon, rose, Blandford's volunteer firefighters were on site at 83 Main Street battling a fire.

Steam rose from the ground where thousands of gallons of water were used to extinguish the flames. The call went out to the firefighters at 4:56 p.m. As Fire Chief Adam Dolby drove to the fire station he saw "fast moving flames" and returned with Squad 2 and Engine 1.

FIRE, page 6



Flames reignited by wind at the rear of the garage.

BLANDFORD

Select Board transfer Animal Control vehicle to Chester

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

The Select Board approved several actions at their Monday, Nov.18 meeting. The board had agreed to sign the ownership of the Animal Control vehicle, a 2013 Ford Explorer, to the Town of Chester earlier this year. After a search for the vehicle's title, it was signed over to Chester.

Gill Engineering

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrara told the board that she and Highway Superintendent Rene Senecal had met with Gill Engineering about the cost overrun for the engineering study. It was agreed that the town would not have to pay for any permits since the application for the construction phase failed. This eliminates approximately \$13,000 from the cost of \$135,000; the Mass Infrastructure Program grants, the Community One Stop award was for \$100,000 and the town will have to cover the difference.

Host Community Agreement

She spoke with a KP-Law attorney regarding the new host community agreement with Pudding Hill, a boutique cannabis cultivation and marketing enterprise in town. Under new guidelines and regulations by the Cannabis Control Commission, the new agreements are "very complicated," according to Ferrara and the attorney is drafting a new agreement.

Emergency Management Plan

The town also has its new Emergency Management Plan completed. Every community is required to develop and maintain an all-hazards emergency operations plan/comprehensive emergency management plan every five years. It does not require submission to the state, but the Select Board must see it.

Accounting firm

A meeting with Town Accountant Eric Kinsherf, CPA resulted in his request that the town hire a new firm quickly so he can facilitate transfer of information. The town is not obligated to go out for bid for an accounting firm.

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HILLTOWNS

Police, fire and nonprofits offer ways to give back

By Kathryn Koegel
Correspondent

The holidays are a season of joy, but also one of increased stress for local families struggling financially.

Luckily, in the Hilltowns nonprofits and local police and fire are stepping up to offer help. Looking for ways to give back? The following organizations are collecting toys, food, and winter clothing. They are also looking for volunteers to help with their initiatives.

“For more than twenty years local families have received help with gifts for their children through a community project called Hilltown Holiday Help,” says Kim Jaszlics Savery, director of community programs at the Hilltown Community Health Center. “This annual effort serves only families within the Hilltowns. Children from birth through age twelve from families with low to moderate income are eligible to receive clothing, books and toys. This effort is organized by the Hilltown Community Health Centers in conjunction with the Gateway Regional High School National Honor Society with contributions from other organizations and individuals throughout the hilltowns and beyond. Last year, we were able to provide gifts for 164 children from 67 families.”

“We are looking for donors! This is



The children of staff of It Takes A Village get into the holiday spirit while moms set up for the annual toy drive and giveaway.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

a community effort,” she says. “Local businesses, schools, churches, fire and police departments, organizations and area residents are invited to help with fundraising and shopping to provide gifts,” says Savery. “Hilltown Holiday Help has also found recipients for holiday meals, cords of wood, help with utility bills, gift cards, gifts for teens and adults and other items when provided. Our greatest need this year is winter coats and boots.” Donors may contact Kim Savery at 413-685-3500 or ksavery@hchcweb.org for more information

on “adopting” a family or how to donate goods or money.

“If you are unable to commit to being a sponsor this year, please look for the National Honor Society and the Huntington Fire Department’s boot drive on Saturday, Nov. 23 at the corner of Routes 20 and 112 in Huntington,” she continues.

The organization is also looking for delivery drivers and she says “We find this to be a great way to channel your inner Santa. This year, we will be operating a little differently again for the safety of families, students, donors and staff. Distribution and deliveries will happen in the afternoon Dec. 11-13.”

She encourages anyone knowing a family in need to have them contact herself or Susan LeBarron at 413-307-6012 or slebarron@hchcweb.org

The Village Closet in Huntington will be the location of an annual toy giveaway from It Takes A Village that will take place Tuesday, Dec. 17 through the Friday, Dec. 20. Families wanting to participate need to email them at info@hilltownvillage.org to be put on the list. The organization is collecting toys from all over the Pioneer Valley and the Hilltowns and works with Toys for Tots. They note that toys for tweens and teens are especially in need and encourage anyone who wants to donate to go to their website and buy off the Amazon Wish List that is linked to on hilltownvillage.org/donate.

Why focus on toys with so many other needs apparent? “Having presents to give for kids is a huge morale booster for parents struggling financially,” says Executive Director Lisa Goding. “It gives them hope that things can get better.”

New unwrapped toys can be dropped off until Sunday, Dec. 15 at the Village Closet, located at 2 East Main Street in Huntington. It is open Sundays and Mondays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Goding says that the need for clothing and their family support services has been rising. They are typically at capacity each day they are open with lines to get in and are hoping that additional cash donations will enable them to increase their opening days and hours.

Prior to the toy giveaway, the organization is holding a major fundraising drive on Tuesday, Dec. 3, on Giving Tuesday, the day developed as a response to the commerce bonanza of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. They are looking for volunteers that day in two hour shifts at the Village Closet to help sort winter clothing as well as the toys they have received. To make the event even more fun and encourage monetary donations they are holding an annual raffle. Anyone who donates to the organization gets a chance to win gift baskets of goods donated by local businesses.

Further north in the Hilltowns, Chesterfield Police Chief Denise Wickland runs the Chesterfield Goshen Children’s Fund, which she created 13 years ago. “Our mission is to provide children under the age of 12, that reside in Chesterfield and Goshen, with warm



The staff of It Takes A Village brought their children to decorate the Village Closet and prep it for holiday toy distribution.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel



The decked out Russell Police Department Humvee will be distributing toys and food to needy families in Russell.

Photo Courtesy of Russell Police Department



Becky Brisbois is putting the finishing touches on a quilt made with the fabric handprints of volunteers from It Takes A Village, the family resources charity that runs the Village Closet in Huntington. The quilt will be auctioned off as a fundraiser on Giving Tuesday, which is Dec.3.

Turley photo by Kathryn Koegel

winter gear (boots, hats, gloves, jackets, and or snowpants, as well as a couple gifts. We want to make sure that every child can experience the magic of the holidays. We start by working with our schools to help us identify which families may need assistance. We take referrals as well for consideration. Our funding comes from donations and our annual Vendor Fair & Raffle which is this Sunday, Nov. 24 at the Goshen Town Hall.” To reach Chief Wickland and the program, email: wicklandd@williamsburgpd.org.

In Russell, the local police department is running an annual toy and food drive for needy residents of Hilltowns. On Saturday, Dec 7 in front of the town hall from 9 a.m.-noon they are collecting non perishable food, and unused toys. A local church is organizing a coat drive.

The police department delivers complete ingredients for meals the week before Christmas. Chief Hennessy encourages people to email him names of people in need at khennessy@townof-russell.us.

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HUNTINGTON

Election results announced

HUNTINGTON – Town Clerk Michelle Fieldstad-Booth announces the election results of the Nov. 5 election.

Huntington followed the national trend and elected the Trump and Vance ticket for President and Vice President with 647. The Harris and Walz team received 550 votes.

The town did not follow the state trend in electing Elizabeth Warren Senator in Congress. The high vote getter was John Deaton with 647 to 550 for Warren. Nor did the town follow the state trend for Representative in Congress with Nadia Donya Milleron getting 599 votes to 561 or Richard E Neal, the state winner. Tara Jacobs 825 votes for Councillor.

Paul Mark received 613 to 557 votes or David Rosa for Senator in General Court. Nicholas Boldyga got 922 votes for Representative in General Court. In other races Daniel Carey got 838 votes for Clerk of Courts, Mary Olberding 838 for Register of Deeds and Mark Ames 844 for Register of Probate.

Ballot question votes were 791 yes and 387 no Question 1 for state auditor audit of legislature and 799 yes and 409 no on Question 2 regarding MCAS testing. Question 3 regarding driver unions was 596 yes and 583 no and on Question 4 psychedelic mushrooms 511 yes and 675 no. Question 5 regarding tipped workers was 347 yes and 849 no and on Question 6 universal healthcare 645 yes and 496 no.

Race Committee holds planning session

By Kathryn Koegel
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – On Thursday, Nov. 14, the Westfield River Whitewater Races organizing committee held an open planning session for its 70th running of the country's oldest whitewater kayak and canoe race.

Twenty community members attended the meeting in Stanton Hall in Huntington to show support and share ideas for how to increase community engagement and ensure the future of the race. "I was thrilled with the large turnout of individuals including seasoned racers and new faces to discuss the future of the Westfield River Wildwater Races," said race committee chair Harry Rock. "There is significant support and enthusiasm for the races as we prepare to celebrate the 70th running. We hope people will join us on Saturday, April 19 to compete and to watch."

The group included past organizer and many-time winner, Jeff DeFeo who worked on the races from 1983 to 2012. Other past course record-setters like Carl Lefreniere and Sue Volrath also attended. New volunteers included Jill Haley Rose of Huntington and Margaret Terkelson of Westfield, who had paddled in the race with her father and now wants to step up and volunteer to help put the race on. The race committee presented some of its archive of historic

photos of the race and had attendees identify racers.

Harry Rock said that the race was on solid financial footing given proceeds and fundraising done in 2024, but that an extensive campaign for national and local sponsors as well as for individual donations will be conducted. "Like every participatory race, this one cannot depend entirely on registration fees. Our costs are too high. We rely on

donors and sponsors." He encourages local businesses who want to support this important community event to consider sponsoring it and reach out by email to wrwraces@gmail.com.



Race Committee Chair Harry Rock with new volunteers Jill Haley Rose and Margaret Terkelson.



This is an image from the first race in 1954, which was comprised of 6 canoes and started on the West Branch of the Westfield River. Submitted photo



Longtime competitors, Bob Allen and Carl Lafreniere, attended the meeting.

Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel

HEARING

from page 1



Huntington Zoning Board of Appeals Chair Karon Hathaway led the meeting, as member Victoria Minella-Sena and alternate Jill Rose take part in the fourth continuance hearing for the proposed Hull Forestlands gravel pit at Stanton Hall on Tuesday, Nov. 12. Turley photo by Wendy Long

mit a proposal, Hathaway said.

The ZBA has also asked Tighe and Bond to consider a study related to silica dust, but there was some question as to whether or not this would be a conflict of interest, as they work with both Hull Forestlands and the town of Huntington. Hulls attorney, Michael Pill, said he didn't believe that this would be a conflict. RPF Environmental is also expected to submit a proposal.

"The process isn't going as quickly as we'd like it to and we do apologize," Hathaway said. She then opened the floor for questions because new people were in attendance.

Susan McIntosh spoke first, wanting to clear up some confusion about the Conservation Commission's involvement with the gravel pit application. She said that the Country Journal had reported that the Conservation Commission had approved the project, but this was not true. McIntosh explained that the Conservation Commission operates under a state law known as the Westlands Protection Act. Anyone proposing to remove, fill, dredge or alter a wetlands area has to go before the Commission for approval. But, McIntosh explained, there is an earlier

step called a Request for Applicability. Hull had asked Huntington's Conservation Commission to determine whether or not the gravel pit site was within a wetlands resource area. The Conservation Commission determined it was not, meaning the Commission has no further jurisdiction in this matter.

One person asked how close the site is to a wetlands resource area and whether or not the Conservation Commission would become involved again if the excavation caused damage to a nearby area. McIntosh answered that the area would have to be affected before they could get involved again.

Robert Hebert, whose home is across the river from the pit, expressed concerns about dust and whether or not the project would spread beyond the original 4.9 acres. Hathaway answered that this was the purpose of these studies. In a previous hearing, Hull had affirmed that there were no more areas of significant gravel on his land.

Amy Porter of Huntington asked if they had looked at endangered species. Hathaway said that Levesque Associates had said there were no endangered species in the site, although property abutters have submitted photos of eagles and other animals in the vicinity.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m., with parties staying on and sharing handouts that they had brought.

Hull shared a map showing the location of his proposed gravel pit and its proximity to Hilltown Sand and Gravel, where materials will be taken for processing. It also purported to show six other gravel pits that the town had approved in close proximity to Hull's land.

However, Goss Hill resident Ed Grabowski disputed the pit that was closest to Hull's pit, saying it was never approved by the town; the owner had simply gone in and dug it up.

Hull's handout also included a listing of the things Hull Forestlands L.P. does for the town of Huntington. Items included paying taxes, employing local people and having forests that preserve the rural character of Huntington. "We have permanently protected over 1,000 acres of forestland in the town of Huntington through conservation

easements with the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife," the paper stated, adding that their forests provide wildlife habitat, recreational opportunity, carbon storage and air and water quality enhancement. Further, it stated that 90% of Hull's Huntington forestland is open to the public for passive non-motorized recreation, such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting and bird watching. The handout also described the four Hull forests in Huntington totaling 1,157 acres and their uses. The largest, a 405-acre Huntington Reservoir Forest, spans the towns of Huntington and Blandford and completely surrounds the Huntington open water surface reservoir, helping to maintain water quality.

Michael Brisebois, who also lives on Goss Hill Road, said he and his neighbors have acquired approximately 150 signatures of residents opposed to the project. The petition names the specific location of the proposed pit, then states, "We oppose this project for a number of reasons, including the noise, health dangers of silica dust, traffic hazards, and impact on the property values for at least three miles from the gravel pit. This project threatens our community health, environmental sustainability, economic welfare, and overall quality of life. We see no benefit for the Town of Huntington or its citizens, if this Special Permit is approved, even with numerous conditions."

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.

COA lists events

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

On Wednesday, Nov. 27 at 2 p.m., the movie "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" will be shown at the Hilltown Memory Café. Popcorn, coffee, tea and water will be provided.

Performer Ed Bentley will entertain seniors on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 2 p.m. A presentation on Winter Health and Safety and blood pressure checks will be provided by the Hampshire Public Health Preparedness Coalition's nursing team on Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 1 p.m.

The Hilltown Memory Café will host a Christmas Party on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 2 p.m. The Hilltown Memory Café is held weekly at 2 p.m. The weekly café provides seniors with activities while their caregivers participate in a support group. The café is open to all with and without memory issues. The Café is made possible by a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services through funding under the Federal Older Americans Act and by a grant from the Huntington Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

All events are free and open to residents of any community. For more information, people may call Crystal Wright-Partyka at 413-685-5283.

HELP WANTED

Town of Chester Town Hall Custodian position

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TownofChester.net
click on News tab,
then click on Job Openings

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN



Older Veteran asks about Special Social Security credit for military service

Dear Rusty

I served in the U S Army from January 1958 to February 1961.

What increase should I receive for those years and who do I call and at what phone number?

Signed: Proud Veteran

Dear Proud Veteran

First, thank you for your military service. I expect you are referring to the "special extra credits for military service," which are available to some who served in the US Military in earlier years. It is important to note that these "extra credits" take the form of an adjustment to your military pay record while serving and are not an incremental amount added to your monthly Social Security benefit because you served.

Military pay has been subject to deductions for Social Security since 1957. Thus, while serving between 1958 and 1961 you paid SS tax on your military earnings. But, for purposes of determining your Social Security benefit, your military earnings record would be increased by \$300 for each quarter you served on active duty, up to a maximum of \$1,200 increase per year of service.

That means for 1958 - 1960, when calculating your SS benefit, \$1,200 would be added to your military earnings record for each year you served. FYI, for those who served after 1967, this adjustment was automatically made by Social Security. But for service years prior to 1967, as in your case, you would need to inform Social Security of your service when you claimed SS and provide a copy of your military form DD-214, your discharge papers. SS would then make the appropriate adjustment to your military earnings record prior to calculating your benefit amount. And, for clarity, additional credits for military service are not available to those who served after 2001.

A key point to understand is that this adjustment to your military pay may or may not affect the amount of your Social Security benefit. Social Security determines your benefit amount based on your highest earning 35 years over your entire lifetime, adjusted for inflation.

SECURITY, page 5

Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to countryjournal@turley.com, or call us at 413-283-8393.

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



GUEST COLUMN

Wrap it up!



I spent this past weekend trying to wrap things up. Before we know it the holidays will be upon us and there will be little time to spend in the garden.

I had, and sadly still have, areas yet to clean up, last minute bulbs to plant and statuary and tools to put into storage. One major concern is how dry it is.

Read on to learn about some chores that should be tackled before the ground freezes.

Honestly, in all my years of gardening I have never felt the need to water in spring bulbs after planting them. This year is the exception.

What about our newly planted perennials, trees and shrubs? Just to be safe, get out the hose and give them a good soaking.

If weather permits, move a slow running hose from shrub to shrub over the course of a few hours. This is especially critical for our broad leaf evergreens such as rhododendrons, azaleas, and Pieris.

Remember the damage on older rhododendrons a few winters back? Some large specimens lost a third or more of their overall size!

Much of that was caused by excessive cold and winter winds that desiccated (removed moisture from) the foliage and left it susceptible to injury. Antidesiccant sprays are available from nurseries and garden centers. These products leave a waxy layer of film over the leaf, locking in its moisture.

Did you purchase any shrubs, roses or otherwise that were so beautiful you couldn't resist, even though they were only marginally hardy in our area (zones 6 or higher)? These need special attention.

Pound some stakes into the ground just outside the drip line of the plant. Wrap the stakes with burlap and stuff it full of straw, salt marsh hay, or shredded leaves, anything that will insulate yet not pack down and cause rot.

Never use plastic; this material creates a

greenhouse of fluctuating temperatures that will surely kill the plant. Climbing plants such as roses or clematis can be removed from their trellises, tied in loose bundles and wrapped in a similar fashion as above.

Many of our evergreen shrubs suffer under the weight of ice and snow. Smaller specimens can be protected by making "A-frame" tents out of plywood and placing them over the susceptible plant. Use hinges rather than nails to construct them; storage during the off-season will be a breeze.

These types of enclosures also provide a great deal of wind protection. Paint them to blend in with the landscape.

Other articles have covered the importance of winter mulch to protect strawberries, fall mums, garlic, and spring flowering bulbs among others. Large evergreen branches do well to cover bigger areas. I have used them successfully to weigh down other light mulches such as straw or chopped leaves for twice the protection.

Remember, this task is best accomplished after the ground freezes, with our goal being to keep it frozen, thereby avoiding thawing spells that heave plants from the ground.

During the winter voles and field mice can wreak havoc on young fruit trees by tunneling through the snow to the bark in search of food. Their gnawing will girdle the tree and if excessive enough will eventually kill it.

Remember, the layer of tissue just below the bark is the tree's "plumbing"! Protect the trunk by wrapping it with one-quarter inch hardware cloth or commercially made trunk protectors. Remove the protectors in the spring.

Unfortunately, I neglected to protect young trees one fall and that was all it took. A poor tree was gnawed almost completely around the trunk. I was surprised it had enough energy to leaf out the following spring, but less surprised to see it wither and die not a month later.

In case you were wondering, yes, my bulbs for Old Sturbridge Village did finally come in. I wish they could talk. What a story they would tell.

I think they have honestly traveled more in the last six weeks than I have in my entire life. Holland to New York to Alabama to the Bahamas to New Jersey and then to a shoe store in New York City. Yes, a shoe store.

GARDEN, page 5

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

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Election letters to the editor welcome

The Country Journal welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Country Journal, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to countryjournal@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that

Friday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

paper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

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

HILLTOWNS

Gas price ticks down two cents

WESTWOOD – Northeast gasoline prices continue to inch lower as gloomier global demand forecasts grip petroleum markets.

Crude oil prices ended last week down about \$3-to-\$5 a barrel after both OPEC+ and the International Energy Agency slashed their demand projections for 2025, citing China's limping economy and the potential for a global gasoline production surplus of more than one million barrels a day.

Domestically, prices for petroleum commodities are lower despite last week's data from the Energy Information Administration that showed a 555,000 barrel a day surge in domestic demand week-to-week. The increase took many market participants by surprise and is expected to be revised lower in future reports by the agency, which is not uncommon. Total demand for last week was a reported 9.3 million barrels a day, 434,000 barrels more than the comparable week last year and more akin to figures seen during the summer driving season. At the same time, regional inventories that supply the Northeast fell by 2.8 million barrels, sending stockpiles below last year's levels by 1.3 million barrels.

Locally, the average gas price in Massachusetts is down two cents from last week (\$3.03), averaging \$3.01 per gallon. Today's price is six cents lower than a month ago (\$3.07) and 42 cents lower than a year ago (\$3.43). The average gas price in Massachusetts is six cents lower than the national average.

"Normally, higher demand and tightening supplies would send prices climbing, but markets are more focused on the long-term global demand picture at this time," said Mark Schieldrop, Senior Spokesperson, AAA Northeast. "A key factor keeping prices steady has been the continued pace of strong domestic oil and gas production throughout 2024."

AAA Northeast's Nov. 18 survey of fuel prices found the current national average down a penny from last week (\$3.08), averaging \$3.07 gallon. Today's national average price is 12 cents cheaper than a month ago (\$3.19) and 25 cents lower than this day last year (\$3.32).

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

MassDOT lists I-90 roadwork

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces the following lane closures will be in effect along I-90, in Becket, West Stockbridge, Stockbridge and Lee, from now to early morning Friday, Nov. 22.

In Becket, overnight lane closures on I-90 westbound, at mile marker 18.4 from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m. the following morning now through to early morning Friday, Nov. 22.

In West Stockbridge and Stockbridge overnight lane closures on I-90 eastbound, from mile marker 3.9 to 6.5, from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m. the following morning through Friday, Nov. 22.

In West Stockbridge and Stockbridge overnight lane closures on I-90 eastbound and westbound, from mile marker 1.0 to 7.0 from 7 p.m.-5:30 a.m. the following morning, now to early morning Friday, Nov. 22.

In Lee daytime lane closures on I-90 eastbound and westbound, from mile marker 7.0 to 7.3 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. now to Friday, Nov. 22.

These closures are necessary to facilitate bridge repair work in Becket, West Stockbridge and Stockbridge and a tree trimming in Lee. The schedule for this work is weather dependent and is subject

to change without notice. Drivers who are traveling through the area should reduce speed and use caution. Appropriate signage and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work area.

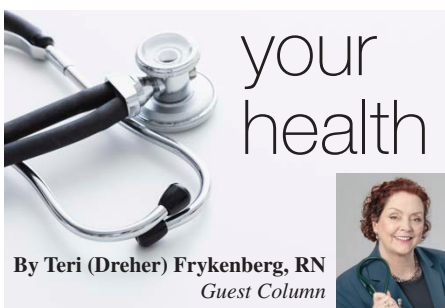
For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to: Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real-time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts 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.

HCHC seeks families in need of assistance

Hilltown Community Health Center works with families with children aged 0 to 12 to ease the burden of the holidays. They will deliver toys, clothing, books, meals and more. If anyone needs assistance this holiday season call HCHC at 413-667-2203.

OPINION

What kind of patient-doctor relationship do you have?



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

I've written before about the patient's role in creating a good relationship with their doctor: Be on time for your appointments; write down your questions and concerns; don't waste time on chit-chat; bring someone with you; be honest about your health habits, good and bad; and if you don't understand something, keep asking until you do.

But a lot of the responsibility for a good patient-doctor relationship lies with the physician; after all, they're the ones with the greater education, knowledge and experience.

Back in 1956, two doctors, Theodore Szasz and Marc Hollender, described three types of doctor-patient relationships. Depending on your situation, you probably have one or more of these:

Active-passive, which they compared to a parent-child relationship, when the physician is acting upon the patient (useful in emergency and trauma situations);

Guidance-cooperation, a sort of parent-adolescent relationship, in which the physician tells the patient what to do and the patient complies;

Mutual participation, a relationship between two adults in which the physician helps the patient help themselves.

In this era of patient-centered care,

there's a clear preference for the mutual participation model. Health-care providers who provide more than just competent care, who bring empathy, open communication, active listening and understanding into the examination room, are more likely to have satisfied patients.

Unfortunately, many aspects of our current health-care system work against the patient-doctor relationship.

There never seems to be enough time for a doctor to really talk with a patient and develop that relationship. Administrative hurdles (problems getting an appointment, for example) hurt the relationship. Sometimes both patients and doctors make assumptions about one another's cultures or backgrounds that may damage patient trust.

How many times will you put up with such roadblocks before you start looking for another doctor? A recent survey found that almost half of the respondents will give their doctor or their staff only two chances to get things right before looking elsewhere.

Why is this even important? Because a good patient-doctor relationship can lead to better health outcomes for you. If your doctor has worked to establish mutual understanding and trust, you are much more likely to divulge information needed for an accurate diagnosis. You may also be more willing to adhere to a treatment plan. A recent survey by Tebra, a health-care marketing firm, found that 87 percent of respondents believe that a strong and positive patient-doctor relationship has a positive impact on their patient journey.

Your relationship with your primary care provider is particularly important

because it's likely you will access other health-care providers through them. Here are five signs that your doctor is invested in their relationship with you.

1. Active communication

In my experience as a private patient advocate, the cause of a poor patient-doctor relationship usually boils down to one thing: communication – either miscommunication or lack of communication. Does your doctor:

- Listen without interrupting?
 - Try to understand your perspective?
 - Validate your concerns?
 - Answer your questions?
 - Solicit information about what's going on in your life?
 - Express empathy and compassion?
- These behaviors on the part of your doctor take your relationship beyond the merely clinical.

2. Person-centered care

Person-centered care focuses on individuals and their particular health care needs. Clinicians are there to inform, advise and provide patient support, but it is ultimately up to individuals to determine their course of action. Does your doctor present all available options and alternatives for treatment and solicit your input in the decision-making?

3. No billing surprises

No one likes an unexpected bill, which causes anxiety and frustration as we try to manage our health-care costs. Does your doctor's administrative staff provide clear, honest and transparent billing information? This goes a long way toward building your confidence and trust

in the practice.

4. Efficient scheduling

Efficient scheduling and office procedures respect your time. Does your doctor offer new patient forms online, online appointment setting and flexible appointment options? Does the office minimize your wait times – and if there's going to be a delay – do they keep you informed?

5. Multiple touchpoints

Is your doctor's practice keeping pace with technology? Do they send text notifications and reminders of appointments? Can you access a patient portal to check your records and ask a question? Do you get follow-up phone calls after a surgical procedure or to keep tabs on a chronic condition?

If you experience this kind of relationship with your doctor, you're more likely to stick with that doctor, follow their advice as to lifestyle changes and adhere to their prescribed treatments. An advocate can always help you find a new physician, but remember to make sure that you're doing your part to make the relationship work.

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.

SECURITY

If, after you served in the military, you had at least 35 years of civilian employment where you earned more than your military pay, it is probable that your military pay is not included when calculating your Social Security benefit. If that is the case, it is likely that the "special extra credits for military service" would have no effect on your Social Security payment. If, however, your military pay including those special extra credits for any year is more than you earned in civilian life, then you can contact Social Security (1-800-

772-1213), provide them with a copy of your DD-214, and ask that they recalculate your Social Security benefit to include the extra credits for your years of military service.

Again, thank you for your service to our country, and please do not hesitate to contact us again if you have any further questions. FYI, you may also find the "For Veterans" section of our AMAC Foundation website by visiting www.amacfoundation.org.

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.

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GARDEN

from page 4

A good Samaritan saw my name on the packing slip and called to say she received them. Regardless, I am happy they finally arrived in Sturbridge. I am hopeful that they will all be planted (and watered in) within the next couple of days!

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

BLANDFORD

BFD's pancake breakfast has history of giving

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – It was 2015 and some defibrillators had been purchased for the Fire Department, but the need was seen for additional equipment in public areas.

The Blandford Fire Department stepped up to the plate and hit a home run when they followed through with the challenge to raise the additional funds to be able to purchase extra defibrillators. There had been \$2,000 in donations to get the project rolling at the time.

Chris Smith served as the treasurer for the event. He said, “They won the challenge. The department got together...” and accomplished what was necessary to raise the balance of the funding for the equipment. Smith said that it was lots of work, and the department had lots of support.

Everyone who attended the breakfast “was happy,” he said. There were many big donations, in excess of \$100 and one for \$250 he said. Enthusiasm was rampant, according to Smith.

The breakfast served over 200 people and took in nearly \$3,000. Less the costs, Smith estimated the net to be in the neighborhood of \$2,300.

He said there was enough money for the defibrillators plus one for the town offices. There is a bit extra that can be used for a mount for the one in the town offices and extra pads for the device, but that, said Smith, “is up to the Fire Department.”

Then, on the Monday following the Saturday breakfast, Smith learned of another anonymous donation that fully funded the third defibrillator, so there was more than sufficient funds to provide for the additional pieces of equipment for the defibrillators.

The event was a huge success thanks to everyone who volunteered to help, residents, town officials, the Volunteer Firefighters, Cub Scouts and everyone who gave their time and toil to help the Fire Department reach its goal.

Fire Chief Adam Dolby speaks highly of the event today, and said he recalled that at the time of the first event, “often department members thought the town doesn’t care until people are calling 911. And we were really touched by the turnout and generosity- and it’s only felt better over time.”

And the event has continued since then and funds raised by the breakfast are put towards any necessary equipment for the department.



Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners from left, Vicky Bianco, Tim Cherubini, Trustee Chuck Benson, Library Director Nicole Daviau, Library Staff Michele Crane, Director MBLC Maureen Amyot and Karen Straub enjoyed lunch at the Porter Memorial Library Wednesday as the finale to a whirlwind Western Mass Library Tour.

Turley photo by Mary Kronholm

Library Commissioners tour local libraries

BLANDFORD – Three members of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners accompanied by the MBLC Director Maureen Amyot, lunched at the Porter Memorial Library Wednesday afternoon.

The visit to Blandford capped a tour of several Western Mass communities and their libraries.

Starting with an arrival in Williamstown Monday evening, the group then visited the Williams College Library and the Milne Public Library then on to Pittsfield and the Hancock Village, new Richmond Public Library, then to Housatonic where they visited

the Ramsdell Library, a branch of the Great Barrington Library and then on to Stockbridge.

Wednesday saw the group at a breakfast reception at the Monterey Library, on to Jacob’s Pillow and finishing up at Blandford.

Director Amyot continued on to Franklin County Jail in Greenfield.

The group learned about rural libraries, their places in their communities and the issues the smaller libraries face.

Alex Reczkowski, Director of the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield, organized the tour



You do not need to be a child to sit on Santa’s lap. Turley photos by Mary Kronholm



Santa and Firefighter John Piper is shown with Santa at a the second Firefighter pancake breakfast.

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www.countryjournal.turley.com

SELECT BOARD

Special Town Meeting

The Town Administrator is working on the draft warrant for a special town meeting. No date has been set yet.

Possible illegal dumping

Ferrara told the board that after Saturday’s fire on Main Street, Fire Chief Adam Dolby had concerns about the accumulation of trash and possible illegal dumping. The Board of Health will inspect the area.

License renewals

The board approved two retail liquor

licenses, one for The Blandford Country Club and the other for The Blandford Country Store for 2025.

Maple Lane and Beagle Club Road

The board approved requests from Maple Lane and Beagle Club Road residents for winter maintenance of those roads for this season. The town accepted legislation in 1973 to permit removal of ice and snow from private ways open to public use. Residents must request this every year.

Other business

George Reichert reported on park

clean up and work done at the former town hall building. “The project is all but done,” he told the board. The new U.S. Post Office sign has been installed and the broken window replaced. He would like to see the town take steps for future maintenance and minor repairs that still need to be corrected. He would also like to see the town address the management of Watson Park and Bicentennial Park and have this be under the aegis of one paid manager; with a maintenance plan in place. He told the board he is pursuing the return of \$7,000 to the Bicentennial Park trust fund.

There were three donations by Winifred Arms, but only two of the three were correctly posted to that account and the third, while in the town coffers, is not allocated to the park.

Executive session

The board had a roll call vote to go into executive session to discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union personnel and not to return to open forum.

FIRE

On site very quickly, “We were able to stop the fire from spreading to the house next door at 85 Main,” he said; the house belonging to Barbara and Michael Davenport. Their garage is only a few yards from the property line where the fire was.

“It was so very windy,” were the words Dolby used repeatedly as he described his team’s efforts to contain and douse the flames.

The wind had billowed flames up and over the Davenports’ neatly stacked woodpile alongside their driveway. Dousing those flames was the initial effort of the firefighters.

The fire had spread to a garage behind the one-time Nichols’ home and the efforts were hindered by a motley collection of trash, garbage and even propane gas tanks.

Flames behind the structure had been extinguished early on, but “it was so very dry, wind reignited where we’d

put out the fire,” said Dolby. The team repeatedly returned to hose down smoldering, steaming mounds along the property line.

“It was so very dry, and so windy, it really was a dangerous fire,” Dolby said. According to Dolby, anything could have caused the fire, due to conditions. The initial flames were at the base of some pine trees, which, if they caught the flames, would have effectively created “Roman Candles,” said one of the firefighters, which would have sent embers flying westerly to the Davenport home, the library and potentially further.

“We were lucky we were as close to the station as possible,” Dolby said, as the tanker had to be refilled with its supply of water. It holds just over 1,000 gallons.

Inspecting the remains, the next morning, the Davenports noted where the burned areas were and pointed out accumulations of trash, “which only recently

appeared,” said Barbara as she pointed to an older model television and a couch. “They weren’t here before,” she said.

Michael said, “I am personally so very grateful for the firefighters’ speedy response and there were so many of them here. They really did a good job. And they are all volunteers.” He added, “We are very lucky.”

The Davenports were not at home at the time and returned to find the street partially blocked and a flurry of activity at their home.

Select Board Chair Cara Letendre gave kudos and praised the Fire Department for their efforts Sunday morning. “To our incredible, volunteer fire department, thank you for your swift and courageous response last night. Your dedication and skill and controlling the fire and preventing it from spreading to nearby homes saved our community from a potential disaster. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering commitment and

bravery. Thank you for keeping us safe.”

The Nichols property, where the fire was, is vacant and has been for some time. Windows are out and the roof in one area is in jeopardy.

Cautions

Dolby reminds everyone to be overly careful when discarding smoking materials such as cigarettes and matches. These can be carried by the wind and the very dry conditions make for dangerous complications.

He also warns people with wood burning stoves to discard ashes only when they absolutely have no hot embers and can be “hand held,” ashes should be dampened down to be certain and can be buried and hosed down before covering over.

The firefighters had done their work, a spectacular save and had departed by 7 p.m. and the Beaver moon continued its journey across the sky.

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RUSSELL

General Knox Road opens after structural Aug. 15 closure

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

RUSSELL – General Knox Road opened to through traffic Tuesday morning at 11:17 a.m.

The road had been closed for structural changes since August 15. The changes included ameliorating the sharp curve in the road at the Russell/Westfield Town Line and “to fix the failing roadway,” said Hoppe.

The work was done and, according to Highway Superintendent John Hoppe, on time thanks to the million dollar One Stop MassWorks grant award.

All in all, the paving included 10,000 feet of new blacktop, a mill-and-fill, according to Hoppe. The town provided supplemental funding from the America Rescue Plan Act to cover paving an additional 900 feet of road surface.

Hoppe said that the road was settling because water was getting under the pavement causing it to fail, so the road has new drainage and sub drainage to correct the issues in the additional 900 feet.

The Russell Highway Department appreciates everyone’s patience while the work was being done. The traffic on Tuesday was heavy with people checking out the work.

Hoppe commended everyone involved with keeping the project on track and on time; Tighe of New York. The MassWorks grant program is administered by the Executive Office of Economic Development.



This rock outcrop remains after curve correction.

Photos courtesy of Russell Highway Department



The exposed rock outcrop on left behind equipment is what’s left after curve correction.



The Western Massachusetts Chapter of the Appalachia Mountain Club seeks volunteers for their annual Wood Day at the Noble View Outdoor Center in Russell on Sunday, Nov. 24 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Submitted photo

Appalachian Mountain Club seek volunteers for wood day

RUSSELL – The Western Massachusetts Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club is looking for volunteers to help with the annual Wood Day at the Noble View Outdoor Center in Russell on Sunday, Nov. 24 anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

AMC certified chain saw operators will cut the wood while volunteers will help with hauling and stacking it. The wood is used in the two cottages on

the property that are rented out to the public and used by professional trail crews that build and maintain the trails. Beverages, snacks and lunch will be provided.

Interested individuals can register by visiting the link at <https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/154164> or email the Noble View Caretaker at nmack@outdoors.org.

All Persons Trail celebrate the launch of ‘Trails for All’

RUSSELL – The Healey-Driscoll Administration launched Trails for All, a comprehensive initiative that will review the current state of universally accessible trails in Massachusetts.

Through intentional trail planning, the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation plans to promote inclusivity for people with disabling conditions and other mobility considerations by implementing trail improvements such as gentle grades, stable surfaces and inclusive signage. The initiative will assess the condition of accessible trails to ensure outdoor recreational activities are available to people living with disabilities, low-income residents and communities of color. MOOR will convene a multi-stakeholder

Trail Access Working Group, conduct an extensive accessible trails assessment, and publish a report on Accessible and Adaptive Outdoor Recreation Opportunities.

“The movement for increased accessibility in the outdoors, has been building momentum. The support of dedicated partners like Unpaved Trails for All, Appalachian Mountain Club, and disability advocates has been invaluable in laying the foundation for this work,” said MOOR Director Paul Jahnige. “Ensuring individuals who use mobility aids can enjoy nature, no matter the season or terrain opens the door for all communities to access the trails.”

“Thousands of people connect to the outdoors in Massachusetts each year

through AMC, and we believe people of all ages and abilities should be able to use to high quality trails and outdoor recreation experiences,” said Appalachian Mountain Club Vice President for Conservation Policy and Advocacy Heather Clish.

“I’m excited that MOOR is forming the Trail Access Work Group, and thrilled that Director Jahnige is taking a leadership role in

this initiative,” said Unpaved Trails for All Founder Meg Bandarra. “The issue of trail accessibility is one that encompasses equity, environmental justice, civil rights, and public health. The establishment of this trail access work group is a vital starting point on the path towards making Massachusetts a more inclusive and equitable place to live and recreate.”

Accessible or “All Persons” trails benefit populations that use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes. Trails that meet accessibility standards provide safe, equitable access for seniors, people with disabilities or mobility considerations, and small children to enjoy nature. Less than 10 percent of the state’s thousands of miles of boardwalks, bikeways and multi-use trails are considered universally accessible. According to census data, nearly half of Massachusetts residents would benefit from accessible trails. Accessible woodland trails are a perfect entryway for individuals and families who have had limited exposure to outdoor recreational activities.



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WORTHINGTON

COA HONORS VETERANS AT POTLUCK LUNCHEON



The Worthington Council On Aging honored its veterans with a potluck luncheon on Monday, Nov. 11 and a visit from veterans agent, Dan Nye. They received hand drawn cards from the students at R.H. Conwell Elementary School.

Congregational church to hold pie, bake sale

WORTHINGTON – The pie bakers are back with assistants this year for the third annual Thanksgiving pre-order pie and bake sale

Each pie is \$20 and must be pre-paid by making out checks to First Congregational Church, 159 Huntington Road. People may pick up pies and purchase other baked goods on Wednesday, Nov. 27 from 1:30-4:30 p.m. or until all baked goods are sold at the church

Pie pre-orders are due Friday, Nov. 22. There are blank order forms and envelopes under the drop box on the Church porch. Pie choices are apple, apple with crumb topping, pecan, pumpkin and chocolate cream.

Gardeners host annual wreath making workshop

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Gardeners will host their annual Wreath Making Workshop on Sunday, Dec. 1 at 1 p.m. at the Worthington Town Hall, 160 Huntington Road.

This is a fundraiser for the Gardeners. All supplies will be provided including fresh greenery, pine cones, berries, wreath frame, florist wire and ribbons to make a beautiful two-sided

wreath. Instructions and guidance are provided. People should bring their own clippers and scissors.

Cost is \$30 per wreath frame. Cider and snacks will be served.

The event will be inside and numbers are limited. Reservations are required to ensure a space and greenery. People should RSVP to Elodi McBride by calling 413-238-4466 by Monday, Nov. 25.

COA to hold holiday luncheon

WORTHINGTON – The Worthington Council on Aging will host a holiday luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at the Comfort Kitchen in Huntington 11:30 a.m.

Dine-in reservations are necessary as there is limited seating. People should RSVP by calling 413-238-1999 by Monday, Dec. 2. They should clearly state their name, address, phone number

and choice of baked cod fillet with parsley bread crumbs and roasted lemon butter or chicken Parmesan with pasta, both including salad and dessert. If calling for more than one person, they should leave the same information for each person.

This is underwritten by the Rolland Fund. People may call Phyllis Dassatti at 413-238-5962 or email coa@worthington-ma.us for more information.

Town holds tree lighting Dec. 1

WORTHINGTON – On Sunday, Dec. 1 at 5p.m. the town tree will be lighted.

The rain/snow date is Sunday, Dec. 8. The evening starts at 4 p.m. and includes a visit from Santa Claus at 4:45 p.m. There will be an opportunity

for children to have their photo with Santa. Carolers will sing holiday classics. Within Worthington will provide food and refreshments.

All are welcome to this Worthington tradition. People should dress for the weather.

HILLTOWN ARTISANS GUILD HOLD HOLIDAY SHOW AND SALE



Local photographer Steve Hamlin showed his work at the Hilltown Artisans Guild annual holiday show on Saturday, Nov. 16 in Worthington.



Michell Rathay displayed her “functional pottery with rustic appeal.”



Denise Meyers LeDuc makes quilts and also turns them into ponchos.

Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel

Happy Thanksgiving

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CHESTERFIELD

Gorge apres Gorge 5K Run and Walk takes off on Dec. 1

CHESTERFIELD – Runners and walkers will celebrate two decades of enjoying nature together at the 20th annual Gorge apres Gorge 5k trail run and family fun walk on Sunday, Dec. 1.

The annual event happens on the Sunday after Thanksgiving at the Chesterfield Gorge in West Chesterfield and features cookie medals for all finishers, hand-knit and crocheted hat awards, raffle prizes from local businesses and a community potluck.

The event was started in 2005 by local runners Leslie Charles and Tanya Rapinchuck as a way to celebrate community, get outside and appreciate nature with friends, family and neighbors at a time of year when New Englanders tend to stay inside. Now organized by Hilltown Land Trust and Beast Coast Trail Running, the event supports the land trust's conservation work in the region.

The family fun walk, which is free,

begins at 9:30 a.m. and the 5K race (\$30 pre-registration, \$35 on site registration) starts at 10:30 a.m. Runners and walkers follow a well-marked course along the nationally designated Wild and Scenic Westfield River. Hot beverages and the potluck follow.

"We're thrilled to ring in the 20th year of this beloved community event," said Hilltown Land Trust Executive Director Sally Loomis. "Our conservation work celebrates the special relationship between people and land, and we love how the Gorge apres Gorge brings the community together in a gorgeous natural place."

Runners and walkers can sign up at www.runreg.com/gorgeapresgorge. The fee is

For more information or to volunteer, contact Sarah Welch at Hilltown Land Trust: sarah@hilltownlandtrust.org (413) 628-4485 ext. 6.



Children and adults pickup up the pace after Thanksgiving at the annual 5K Run and Walk. Photo by Ana Seller



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January 25, 2023
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Grandparents: Donald & MaryAnn Dunbar, Ware
Thomas & Sharon Legasey, Spencer

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Deadline for photos and forms is Monday, December 16, 2024

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

School Committee meeting focuses on future

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – The Nov. 13 Gateway Regional School Committee meeting focused on the future across several agenda items: a report on a group site visit to two schools in Kentucky, the Gateway Regional School (grades 6 – 12) School Improvement Plan and the Superintendent’s Evaluation goals.

Russell representative Lyndsey Papillon gave a presentation on a group trip to two Kentucky schools that took place from Oct. 21 – 24. Showing pictures from the two schools the team visited, this work was funded through the Barr Foundation and hosted by Next Generation Learning Challenges. Through pictures, Papillon pointed out the innovative measures in place in the schools they visited.

As part of their reflection, the team then completed a walk-through to compare what they were seeing at Gateway schools. Bright spots included inviting, warm spaces in classrooms, a strong rapport between staff and students, ties to student identities and observing “productive struggles,” where students are challenged to think deeper. Areas for improvement and Papillon stressed that this was a one day snapshot was seeing classrooms physically set up in small groups, but not seeing discussion and collaboration taking place consistently. They were also not sure that students understood the task at hand and next steps and they felt they saw too much teacher-centered instruction.

Papillon reviewed Gateway’s instructional vision that was developed from last year’s work with the Barr Foundation. For students, this included engaging in the school community, recognizing strengths and areas of growth, supporting each other, seizing opportunities and directing next steps for learning based upon student interests, knowing what they are learning and why they are learning it, and pushing through challenging tasks with positive attitudes. Outcomes for staff included knowing every student, believing in their potential, pushing each student to grow as a learner, and creating meaningful and personalized opportunities.

Gateway’s “three brave questions,” said Papillon, are 1) how an advisory program might build authentic relationships and support deeper learning; 2) how to grow student excitement and 3) how to tackle fixing things that aren’t working. Papillon also talked about the Kentucky schools using “passion proj-



Gateway Regional School Committee Chair Jason Fergue of Chester, left and Superintendent Kristen Smidy are shown at the Nov. 13 meeting. *Turley photo by Wendy Long*

ects” that allow students a break from academics to focus on learning based on student interests. Models in Kentucky included a January Term and upper grades going off campus for learning at community colleges.

One of the schools created their own “portrait of a graduate,” which named seven habits/expectations that every student works toward in the areas of learning, community, critical thinking, communicating, decision-making and an ability to initiate collaboration. Their advisory block is geared toward those seven habits.

The team also looked at career pathways, internships, dual enrollment, co-op work opportunities and growing community partnerships for student opportunities. Committee members raised potential challenges to moving in such a direction, including how these would fit into Massachusetts’ requirements for time on learning, having a structure that is manageable for staff and meaningful for students and how these changes would fit the teacher’s and other union contracts.

Related to the district’s future direction were approval of the Superintendent’s Evaluation Goals and approval of the Gateway Regional School’s School Improvement Plan for 2024-2025. Effective this year, the former Gateway Regional Middle School and High School have become one school. Gateway Regional School serves students in grades 6 through 12. GRS’s improvement plan covers six areas: curriculum and teaching, school culture, college and career planning, out-of-classroom experiences, operational efficiency and community engagement. The plan will be posted to the district website: www.grsd.org.

“I wish the general public would read it,” Chairman Jason Fergue said, adding that it addresses how to make

schools better and explains why education costs so much.

In other business, the Committee reviewed an advisory from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education related to the binding resolution from Ballot Question 2 in last week’s election, which removed passing the MCAS exam as a condition for a high school diploma. Additional information will be coming from the state, but for now districts were directed to continue with the retest where high school students get to try again at this time. The MCAS exam will still be given across all grades that currently test. Committee members expressed concern that, without the high stakes nature of the test, students might not try as hard and families might opt out entirely. Presently, state funding and ranking of schools is tied to the percentage of students taking part in the test.

The School Committee also voted to approve hosting the Hilltown Community Health Center’s Family Playgroup program at Chester Elementary School from January to the end of school. Superintendent Kristen Smidy said that if it worked out, they might expand and allow a second playgroup next year at the Gateway complex. If it doesn’t work out, the agreement can be revoked at any time. HCHC had previously held the playgroup at the building they leased at 9 Russell Road in Huntington, but that lease has ended.

The meeting marked the first reading of changes to the sub rate policy. If approved at next month’s meeting, it would increase teacher sub rates from \$130 to \$175/day; LPN Nurse subs from \$20 – 430/hour; RN subs from \$30 – \$40/hr; custodian, secretary and security sub rates from \$20 to \$22/hour; and food service and paraprofessional subs from \$15 to \$17/hour. Gateway has difficulty

recruiting substitutes; Smidy said these were created by looking at other districts’ rates and nudging them upward, as the district’s location, she believes, is also a barrier.

Student Representative Theodore DeAngelis-Page reported on a survey he sent to 90 students in grades 6 – 12 about their experiences with recent events and changes, including dropping MCAS as a graduation requirement, the recent visit by a symphonic band from a German high school and a new homework policy. Most students 80% thought the band visit went well and most were happy with the vote on ballot question 2. The new homework policy was less popular, with 71% of students saying they’d seen an increase and 73% saying they were upset about it or having trouble doing the work. Policy sub-committee members asked that he get the data to their committee, through Smidy. DeAngelis-Page also reported on a highly attended semi-formal, school fundraisers and recent field trips: woodworking students to a lumber yard, a trip to WMASS News for students interested in journalism and television production, and a visit to Springfield Technical College for students interested in health care, among other events and activities. The Fall Sports Banquet was held on Nov. 19 for cross-country and soccer teams.

During the communications portion of the meeting, Smidy reported that Rural School Aid has still not been announced or released, but-ironically-her first report on how it is being spent is due shortly. She also announced that several contractors will be inspecting the Gateway roof on Monday with an eye toward getting through the next two years until Gateway becomes eligible for state funding to help pay for a new roof. Gateway member towns are making their last payments on the building program, which renovated Gateway and constructed Littleville and Chester Elementary Schools, this year.

Finally, Curriculum Director Deanna LeBlanc reported that Title I funding is now shared between all three schools. The grant requires an annual meeting of families, which is not well attended. LeBlanc asked for ideas on how to get more parents to attend. Lisa Goding suggested holding the parent meeting before the start of Open Houses.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47. The next meeting of the Gateway Regional School Committee will be Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. in rooms 117/119. This meeting will be a first look at budget items for FY 26.

Henry David Thoreau Foundation awards collegiate scholarships

The Henry David Thoreau Foundation awards collegiate scholarships of up to \$26,000 to eight to ten students graduating from public or private high schools in Massachusetts.

As Henry David Thoreau Scholars, these select high school seniors may enroll in any college and university in the world while they major or minor in an environmentally related field. The Henry David Thoreau Scholarships are up to \$26,000 four-year scholarships awarded to eight students graduating from public or private high schools in Massachusetts. High school seniors awarded the Henry David Thoreau Scholarships can enroll in any college and university in the world while they major or minor in an environmentally related field.

Henry David Thoreau Scholars are encouraged to enroll in internships or study abroad to broaden their awareness and understanding of environmental issues. Henry David Thoreau Scholars have studied a wide variety of environmentally relat-

ed areas, including biology, epidemiology, oceanography, international affairs and environmental law, and upon completing their undergraduate degrees, they became members of the Henry David Thoreau Society.

The Henry David Thoreau Foundation further assists its scholarship winners by identifying environmentally related internships, offering internship stipends, and providing networking opportunities. Upon graduation from college, Henry David Thoreau Scholars are inducted into the Henry David Thoreau Society. A sign of success of the Henry David Thoreau Foundation’s mission to foster environmental leadership is the support past scholarship winners provide to present scholarship winners.

To learn more about the Henry David Thoreau Foundation and the Henry David Thoreau Scholarships, people may visit thoreauscholar.org. Students have until Feb. 1, 2025 to apply.

Girls on the Run Western Mass. to host 5K event on Sunday

WESTFIELD – Girls on the Run Western Massachusetts will host its 5K event on Sunday, Nov. 24 starting at 9 a.m. at Westfield State University and is expecting 3,000-3,500 people.

Girls on the Run is a physical activity-based, positive youth development program that uses fun running games and dynamic discussions to teach life skills to girls in third to eighth grade. During the ten-week program, girls participate in lessons that foster confidence, build peer connections and encourage community service while they prepare for an end-of-season celebratory 5K event.

This fall season Girls on the Run WMA is celebrating its 10th year. They have served over 11,000 girls since the start in 2015. This fall the program has 750 participants in 56 sites around all four Western Massachusetts counties, with 250 volunteer coaches that bring the curriculum to life. Participants learn

many important life skills throughout the lessons. This 5K is the culmination of a 10-week, 20-lesson social emotional program, bringing together all participants, coaches, running buddies and families.

The run starts at 10:30 a.m., but the group warm up will begin at 10 a.m. with participants arriving for fun events at 9 a.m. The event starts with activities, a group warm up and more. Participation in the 5K event is open to the public and all proceeds from the event will benefit Girls on the Run WMA. Registration cost is \$25 for adults and \$10 for youth under 12 and includes an event 5K shirt for the first 700 registered. Early arrival is suggested. Registration opens at 9 a.m.

Girls on the Run WMA is also looking for volunteers for this event. For more information about the event, how to register, and volunteer opportunities, people may visit www.girlsontherun-westernma.org.

PITTSFIELD

Berkshire Pulse partners with Boys and Girls Club

PITTSFIELD – Berkshire Pulse, South County’s dynamic dance and performing arts education center located in the heart of Housatonic, announces their continued partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of the Berkshires for the After School Dance Program.

The program offers youth, ages 9 – 13, free weekly dance classes in a range of styles for Pittsfield Public School students and Boys & Girls Club members. Pulse’s experienced teaching artists help students develop strength, musicality, artistry, teamwork and self-confidence while introducing them to the cultural contexts in which these different styles were developed.

All classes take place at Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires, 16 Melville St. For more information and registration, people may visit the Boys and Girls Club of the

Berkshires website at bcgberkshires.org or call 413-448-8258.

The classes offered as part of this program include: Dances of Africa with Noel Staples-Freeman Mondays from 4-5 p.m., (December only), Ballet with Laura Coe Wednesdays from 4-5 p.m. through Dec 19, Modern/Jazz Foundations with Madisyn Boussie Wednesdays from 6-7 p.m. through Dec 19 and Danza Latina (en español!) with Sandra Bonilla (ages 5-10) Wednesdays from 4-5 p.m. through Dec 19.

Founded in 1995, Berkshire Pulse is a dynamic nonprofit center for creative arts whose mission is to build and strengthen community life through diverse and accessible programming including dance, movement, theater, music and performance.

Berkshire Art Association biennial show closes Nov. 23

PITTSFIELD – The Berkshire Art Association announces the closing reception for Visible, the BAA Biennial Show on Saturday, Nov. 23 from noon-2 pm.

This show includes paintings, prints sculpture, jewelry, photography, ceramics and videography. Berkshire County artists in the show are Carolyn Abrams, Karen Bognar-Khan, Elizabeth Cassidy, A.F. Cook, Kasha Cooper, Diane Firtell, Larry Frankel, Marion Grant, Sarah Horne, Karen Kane, Falcon Laina, Katie Maier, Devin Maloney, Joseph Messer, Barbara Patton, Shany Porras,

Janet Pumphrey, Ilene Richard, Joan Rooks, Natasha Wein, Violet Wilcox and Dan Woods. Artists from the greater Northeast region include Frank Greco, David Hinchin, Megan Hyde, Matanda Keyes and Brian Schmidt. Janey Pumphrey and Joseph Messer were recognized with Jurors’ Awards at the Monday, Oct. 7 opening reception.

To view this show, people may call 413-499-9348 for an appointment. For updated information, people may visit berkshireartassociation.org and follow BAA on Facebook and Instagram.



Downtown Pittsfield to hold Winter Window-land Decorating Contest

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and RSI Signs announced the Winter Window-land Decorating Contest in Downtown Pittsfield to be held Monday, Dec. 16 through Friday, Dec. 27.

First Floor Level Locations on North and South Street between West Housatonic Street and Wahconah Street are invited to compete for the title of “Best Decorated Windows for the Holidays” in this free contest sponsored by RSI Signs and Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.

RSI Signs offers the Essentials

Package as the prize for the winner of the “Best Decorated Windows for the Holidays,” a \$500 value.

Locations that would like to be involved must fill out the Google Form at <http://bit.ly/3O4YLOm> by Wednesday, Dec. 4 or email Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. at kgritman@downtownpittsfield.com or 413-443-6501. Participating locations will receive a flyer to put in their window with the QR code for voting and some small handwritten ballots that can be dropped off to the DPI mailbox. Locations must sign up by Wednesday, Dec. 4 to be included in the voting.

Online voting will be conducted from Monday, Dec 16 through Friday, Dec. 27. Voting will be via a Google Form with more details to be announced. Stay tuned to downtownpittsfield.com and @DowntownPittsfield on Facebook for voting announcements.

This package is the perfect starting point for businesses looking to boost their visibility and marketing efforts. It includes essential signage and promotional materials to help them get noticed-whether they’re just starting out or looking to refresh their branding.

The mission of Downtown Pittsfield,

Inc. is to strengthen and promote Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.’s membership through advocacy, collaboration, and celebration.

Since 1983, Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. has been the recognized leader, facilitator, and principal advocate for downtown. DPI is a membership organization consisting of property owners, businesses, residents, cultural & entertainment venues, restaurants and non-profit organizations who have joined forces to increase economic activity by promoting downtown as a great place to live, work, and play.

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WESTHAMPTON

Library lists December programs

WESTHAMPTON – The Westhampton Library, 11 North Road, will be closed Tuesday, Dec. 24, Wednesday Dec. 25 and Wednesday Jan. 1. Library hours are Monday and Thursday from 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

To place a request for curbside pickup, patrons may email westhampton@cwmar.org or call 413-527-5386. Recurring programs include computer classes with Bob Miller on the second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, Knitting Group Mondays at 6 p.m., and Yoga on Mondays at 6 p.m. Yoga is drop-in, first-come/first-served, and registration is not required.

Scrabble Group

Other events include Scrabble Group on Tuesdays at 2 p.m., Book Group on the fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m., Walk-in Wellness Clinics w/with Westhampton's Public Health Nurse on first and third Wednesdays from 10- 11:30 a.m., and Coffee and Chat Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

CFCE Playgroup

CFCE Playgroup meets Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., Story time Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. and After School Fun on

Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. There will be a fun activity every Thursday this month after school.

LEGO Club

LEGO Club meets the first Thursday, Craft Club second Thursday; Nintendo Switch Happy Hour third Thursday, Comics Club fourth Thursday and Board Games fifth Thursday.

Teen Craft Night

Teen Craft Night meets Thursday, Dec. 19 at 6 p.m. This month's craft is a needle-felted cat. Materials are limited to eight participants and registration is required. Teens may register by emailing Emily at ewayne@cwmar.org. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring all teen crafts.

Artists are Art Always Studio

December/January Artists are Art Always Studio. A reception will be held Thursday, Dec. 12 from 6-7:30 p.m. Artists from the Art Always Studio in Florence will be exhibiting their work for the months of December, 2024 and January, 2025 at the Westhampton Library. The artists, from two different classes, have been painting together with their instructor Lindsay Fogg-

Willets and will exhibit paintings done in class of various subjects and mediums.

Watercolor Paint Night

On Thursday, Dec. 5 from 6-8 p.m. there will be a watercolor paint night with Mary Cleary. Participants will paint a seasonal painting while learning basic watercolor techniques and color theory. Registration is required as space is limited. People may call 413-527-5386 or email westhampton@cwmar.org to sign up. All materials are provided. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.

Breakfast and a Movie

Breakfast and a Movie will take place Saturday, Dec. 21 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

People may bring the whole family to the library for a family-friendly seasonal movie. The children will have three film options and can vote on their favorite. Breakfast pastries and juice will be served. Pajamas and stufferies are welcome and encouraged. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring this event.

Book on First 225 years reprinted

WESTHAMPTON – "Local Color: Stories of Westhampton's First 225 Years," will soon be reprinted for the third time.

Edited by James E. Bridgman, Sarah Mulvehill and Jacqui Hickey LaFrance, the book was created in time for the town's 225th anniversary in 2003. A community collaboration for the record books, this unique town history is a treasure-trove of information and an invaluable history resource, whether researching ancestors, early ice harvesting, maple sugaring or learning more about your current neighbors.

Westhampton's own citizens authored much of "Local Color." Page after page of anecdotes, poignant recollections, descriptions of old-time farming methods and biographical sketches recalling former residents will keep readers entertained all winter long. Dozens of photographs of former residents, homes and early views of town illustrate the book.

Reprints are being coordinated by the Westhampton Historical Society in response to several recent requests. To reserve a copy, people should leave their name and contact information with Barbara at 413-409-2235. Books will be sold at cost.

CUMMINGTON

Friday Night Cafe set for Nov. 22

CUMMINGTON – The Friday Night cafe wraps up the 2024 season on Friday, Nov. 22 from 7-9 p.m. with the wonderful Louise Coombe, formerly Mosrie, at the Village Church in downtown Cummington in the heart of the Cummington Cultural District.

The cafe will be back for the 2025 season in January. Now residing in Williamsburg, Coombe grew up on a farm in middle Tennessee with English parents. She is a late bloomer; writes lots of American roots songs and tells the stories behind them. Compared to Nanci Griffith, Emmy Lou Harris and Alison Krauss, she's opened shows for America, Joe Ely, Jonatha Brooke, Allison Moorer, Greg Trooper, Malcomb Holcombe, Mindy Smith and Cliff Eberhardt.

A Louise Coombe's show is warm, intimate, funny and thought provoking; she weaves together narratives between songs peppered with humorous personal stories and historical anecdotes with her

unique Southern point of view. She has won top honors at songwriting contests around the country including Kerrville, Texas New Folk, the only two time winner; Telluride Bluegrass Festival in Colorado; Rocky Mountain Folks Fest in Colorado; Falcon Ridge Folk Festival in New York and SolarFest in Vermont.

The event is free; donations are appreciated. Snacks are provided, bring your own drinks. The show will take place in the intimate vestry space. Masks are welcome, and encouraged. This is brought by the friendly folks at the Village Church, who believe music can be a powerful force for building community. Friday Night Cafe receives promotional support from the Cummington Cultural District, and is supported in part by grants from the Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Hinsdale-Peru, Plainfield, Williamsburg, Windsor and Worthington Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

BECKET

Art Center holds dance Nov. 23

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will hold a dance party for all ages on Saturday, Nov. 23 from 7-9 p.m. This fundraiser in support of the BAC's "Music Brings Communities Together" series will feature the music

of D-Rod and the Uprising, a local band known for getting people out on the dance floor. Beverages and light refreshments will be available for purchase. Tickets are \$10. For more information, people may visit becketartscenter.org.

Athenaeum lists upcoming events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., is accepting bids for its online silent auction now through Friday, Nov. 29.

The Big Read program teaches how to coil a basket using pine needles from Florida and dyed raffia with Elizabeth Whyte Schulze on Saturday, Dec. 7 from noon-3 p.m. at the Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road. Coiling is one of the oldest basketry techniques and was used by several tribes in the American Southwest. This class is fun for all skill levels. Space is limited and registration is required.

The Becket Athenaeum will be closed Wednesday, Nov. 27 and Thursday, Nov.

28 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The book club meets Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 1:30 p.m.. The book is "Unaccustomed Earth" by Jhumpa Lahiri. Movie night for adults will be held Saturday, Dec. 7 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. The movie starts at 7 p.m.

On Monday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. the Cookbook Club will meet and share favorite finger foods and have an optional cookie swap. Game night will be held Thursday, Nov. 21 and Thursday, Dec. 19 from 6-8 p.m.

Ongoing events include: Tuesdays from 10-11 am. Baby and Toddler Playgroup, Saturday from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Story Time and Craft and Saturdays from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

CHESTER

Tree lighting takes place Nov. 29

CHESTER – The annual Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on Friday, Nov. 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the town tree at Veteran's Memorial Park on Route 20.

Once the tree is lit, there will be caroling followed by refreshments at

Town Hall. All are welcome and the event is free and will be held rain, snow or shine. The event is sponsored by the Chester Recreation Committee, Chester Municipal Electric Light Company and Mel's Kitchen. All are welcome.

Library hosts 'Sourdough Brandon'



Brandon Cochran, "Sourdough Brandon," gave a presentation on how to create and maintain sourdough starter.

Submitted photo

CHESTER – The Hamilton Memorial Library extends gratitude to the Massachusetts Cultural Council for sponsoring their successful event, "Sourdough Brandon" on Wednesday, Nov. 13.

Brandon Cochran, "Sourdough Brandon," gave a presentation on how to create and maintain sourdough starter. Everyone left with instructions and a sample of starter to help get them started with sourdough baking. The library will be hosting Brandon again in the near future for a follow-up session.

The Hamilton Memorial Library will be closed on Wednesday, Nov. 27 and Thursday, Nov. 28 for the Thanksgiving Holiday. They will resume normal hours on Saturday, Nov. 30 at 9 a.m.

EASTHAMPTON

Drowning occurs at Lower Mill Pond

EASTHAMPTON – A 25-year-old Blandford man died Saturday after he fell into the Lower Mill Pond while kayaking, despite bystander efforts to rescue him.

Emergency responders received a 911 call at 2:45 p.m. from witnesses reporting that a man was in distress in the water. Two people had entered the water attempting to save him but were unable to rescue him.

The kayaker was subsequently recovered by police dive team members and he was declared deceased at 5:15 p.m. Another person kayaking with him was not injured.

The Easthampton Fire and Police departments, members of the Hampden County Regional Dive Team, Massachusetts State Police Dive Team, and the Massachusetts Environmental Police Boat and Recreational Vehicle Safety Bureau, as well as detectives with the Northwestern District Attorney's State Police and the State Police Crime Scene Services Unit all were on the scene.

No foul play is suspected. The investigation is ongoing. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death.

OTIS

Collector announces holiday, vacation

OTIS – The Otis Collector’s office will be closed from Wednesday, Nov. 27 through Thursday, Dec 5 for Thanksgiving and vacation. The Collector will return on Monday, Dec. 9.

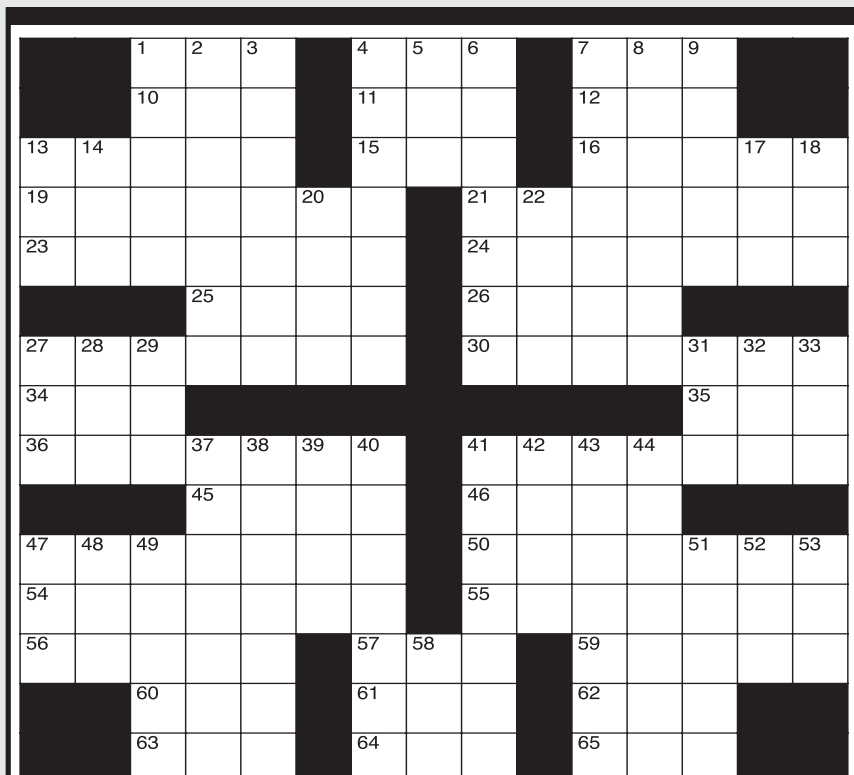
Gingerbread houses decoration event to be held on Dec. 15

OTIS – Make and decorate gingerbread houses will take place to Sunday, Dec. 15 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Otis Town Hall, 1 North Main Road. This event is free for all ages.

Registration is required; no drop ins. To register, people should email townofotisrec@gmail.com with the number of the houses and number of participants by Sunday, Dec. 1.

Transfer Station list holiday hours

OTIS – The Transfer Station will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 28 for Thanksgiving. The Transfer Station will be open on Friday, Nov. 29 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Defunct airline
- 4. Beverage container
- 7. A team’s best pitcher
- 10. Unit of liquid capacity
- 11. It comes before two
- 12. Male child
- 13. Type of wheat
- 15. One’s mother
- 16. Upper side of an organism
- 19. United is one
- 21. Extraction process
- 23. A being with lesser divine status
- 24. People living together in a community
- 25. Luxury automaker
- 26. This (Spanish)
- 27. Semitic language
- 30. Period for a defined purpose
- 34. Wander aimlessly in search of pleasure

- 35. Up in the air (abbr.)
- 36. American marsupial
- 41. Decadent dessert
- 45. Aquatic plant
- 46. About aviation
- 47. Summer footwear
- 50. Rugged mountain ranges
- 54. With tin
- 55. Cut on the surface of a hard object
- 56. Wrapped in cloth
- 57. Defensive nuclear weapon
- 59. “American Idol” contestant Clay
- 60. Midway between east and southeast
- 61. Court decision “___ v. Wade”
- 62. Born of
- 63. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 64. Actress ___-Margaret
- 65. Not even

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Heat unit
- 2. ___ Faulkner, American writer
- 3. Guatemalan town
- 4. Of funny things
- 5. Actress ___ de Armas
- 6. Agents of one’s downfall
- 7. Takes forcibly
- 8. Body lice
- 9. Large nest of a bird of prey
- 13. Unhappy
- 14. Popular holiday dessert
- 17. Habitual drunkard
- 18. Used of a number or amount not specified
- 20. Complications
- 22. Fail to win
- 27. Before the present
- 28. Musical genre
- 29. Flurry
- 31. 007’s creator

- 32. Indiana Pacer Toppin
- 33. Midway between north and northeast
- 37. Feeling
- 38. Damage another’s reputation
- 39. Mottled citrus fruit
- 40. Beauty product
- 41. They man first, second and third
- 42. Harness
- 43. Herb
- 44. Expressed concern
- 47. Mississippi scientific area (abbr.)
- 48. Consumed
- 49. Nostrils
- 51. Gathered fallen leaves
- 52. Express good wishes
- 53. Monetary unit of Brunei
- 58. Japanese Buddhist festival

THIS WEEK’S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, put aside any errant musings and give important tasks your utmost attention this week. Energy is better spent on others, so keep this in mind when you get busy.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Your partner is the most important person in your life right now, Cancer. So much so that this week every bit of your attention will be focused his or her way.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

A few jobs need to get done, Libra. But afterwards you should have plenty of time for some social interaction, whether that be attending a party or simply enjoying a night out.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, the next challenge on your list could be a big one. But if there is anyone who can handle the pressure, it is you. Don’t be afraid to call on friends if you need them.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, your coworkers are all excited and fussing over a new development. Maintain an even keel as you assess the situation. You can be curious, but be guarded as well.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, money could be burning a hole in your pocket, so you might want to go on a spending spree. Keep in mind that there are a few big-ticket purchases waiting in the wings.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, think about the things you want instead of what other people want. It’s alright to be a little selfish once in a while and put yourself first for a change.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, go out into the world and try a few new things. Your social energy and curiosity might peak this week, and you’ll need new experiences to feel satisfied.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, your love life is in a really good place this week, which enables you to spend some quality time with your special someone. A romantic dinner sounds like a good plan.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

You don’t always have to be decisive, Virgo. Sometimes you can kick back and let someone else make decisions for a change. This is a great way to rest and recharge.

SAGITTARIUS

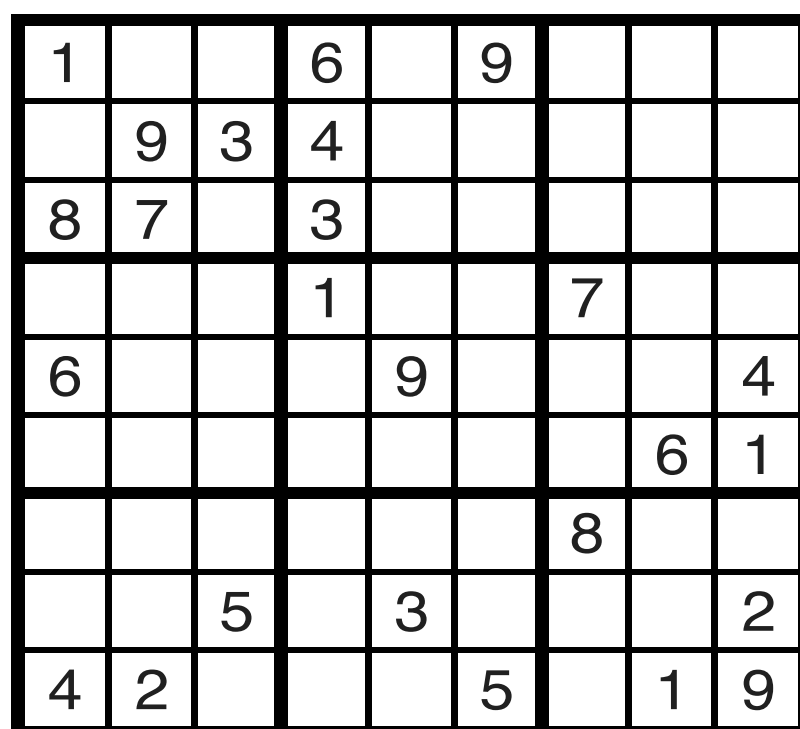
Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you could have fun this week and so may all the other people around you simply for being in your presence. This situation will continue in the days ahead.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Your finances might need an overhaul, Pisces. This could mean taking a new job or expanding what you’re doing to earn more. Start putting out feelers to gain information.



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

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OBITUARY

Kenneth A Baker, 47

MIDDLEFIELD – Kenneth A. Baker, 47 died Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024.

He was born in Springfield on June 19, 1977 to his parents Kenneth and Pamela (Wilander) Baker. He grew up in Westfield and Middlefield and was a 1996 graduate of Gateway Regional High School. Kenny was an avid writer always maintaining a Journal. He also worked in the restaurant industry for many years.

Ken played baseball for Gateway and was an avid sports fan. Philadelphia Eagles and Boston Red Sox being his favorite Pro Teams. He was also big Pearl Jam fan and loved animals. He lived in California for six years with his girlfriend, Seana Estavillo, where they maintained a sanctuary for abandoned animals and traveled the world attending Pearl Jam concerts in several countries.

He leaves his parents Ken and Pam Baker of Middlefield; his daughter, Willow Delilah Baker and her mother Angela Skornia of Barkhamsted, Connecticut; his sisters, Bridget Baker of Huntington and Erica Parker and her husband Matt of West



Springfield. He also leaves his aunts and uncles Susan Mineau (God Mother) of Westfield, Nancy O'Melia and her husband Paul of East Longmeadow, Paula Baker of Springfield, Deborah and Ronald Gibbons of Westfield, John Rheame of Westfield, three nephews Nathan and Isaiah Solitario and Michael Parker and several cousins.

He was pre-deceased by his brother, William Baker; his grandparents William and Lillian Wilander and Mainus and Jeanne Baker; his uncle Wayne Baker and Paul Mineau, and his cousin Patrick J. Gallagher.

Calling hours will be held on Thursday, Nov. 21 from 4-7 p.m. at the Firtion-Adams Funeral Service, 76 Broad St., Westfield. Funeral will be held on Friday, Nov. 22 at 9 a.m. from the funeral home followed by a Mass in Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Church, 127 Holyoke Road, Westfield. Burial will follow in Old North Road Cemetery in Worthington. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Willow D. Baker Care Fund, Care of TD Bank, 60 Main St., Westfield, MA 01085. Firtionadams.com.

DEATH NOTICE

BAKER, KENNETH A.

Died Nov. 14, 2024
 Calling hours Thursday, Nov. 21 from 4-7 p.m.
 Funeral Friday, Nov. 22 at 9 a.m.
 Firtion-Adams Funeral Service
 76 Broad St., Westfield

Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

MORTGAGEE'S NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain Mortgage given by Edward C. Bruneau and Katherine E. Bruneau to Household Finance Corporation II, dated May 7, 2007 and recorded with the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 9124, Page 157, subsequently assigned to MTGLQ Investors, L.P. by Household Finance Corporation II by assignment recorded in said Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 12631, Page 105, subsequently assigned to Loan Acquisition Trust 2017-RPL1 by MTGLQ Investors, L.P. by assignment recorded in said Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 12857, Page 142, subsequently assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee for Loan Acquisition Trust 2017-RPL1 by assignment recorded in said Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 14629, Page 88, subsequently assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee for Loan Acquisition Trust 2017-RPL1 by U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity

but solely as Owner Trustee for Loan Acquisition Trust 2017-RPL1 by assignment recorded in said Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 14904, Page 281 for breach of the conditions of said Mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing same will be sold at Public Auction at **11:00 AM on December 12, 2024** at 104 Pond Brook Road, Huntington, MA, all and singular the premises described in said Mortgage, to wit:

ALL THAT CERTAIN REAL ESTATE SITUATE IN HUNTINGTON, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS, BEING ON THE NORTHEASTERLY SIDE OF A HIGHWAY KNOWN AS ROUTE #66, AND COMPRISING THE FOLLOWING TWO PARCELS:

TRACT 1:
 BEGINNING AT AN IRON PIPE ON SAID NORTHEASTERLY SIDE OF ROUTE #66;

THENCE RUNNING SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG SAID HIGHWAY A DISTANCE OF 300 FEET TO AN IRON PIPE AT A STONE WALL AND TRACT 2 HEREIN DESCRIBED;

THENCE RUNNING NORTHERLY 300 FEET ALONG SAID TRACT 2 TO A 3 INCH IRON PIPE;
THENCE RUNNING

SOUTHWESTERLY 260 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, CONTAINING 35,152 SQUARE FEET OF LAND, MORE OR LESS.

TRACT 2:
 BEGINNING AT AN IRON PIN ON THE NORTHEASTERLY SIDE OF ROUTE #66, WHICH IRON PIN IS ALSO THE SOUTHEASTERLY CORNER OF TRACT 1 DESCRIBED ABOVE;

THENCE RUNNING NORTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID TRACT 1 A DISTANCE OF 300 FEET TO A 3 INCH IRON PIPE;

THENCE AT A RIGHT ANGLE EASTERLY ALONG LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF ELMER R. JOHNSON ET UX, A DISTANCE OF 320 FEET TO AN IRON PIPE; THENCE AT A RIGHT ANGLE SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID JOHNSON LAND A DISTANCE OF 300 FEET TO AN IRON PIPE AT SAID HIGHWAY;

THENCE RUNNING WESTERLY ALONG SAID HIGHWAY A DISTANCE OF 50 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

BEING THE SAME PROPERTY CONVEYED FROM EDWARD C. BRUNEAU TO EDWARD C. BRUNEAU AND KATHERINE E. BRUNEAU, HUSBAND AND WIFE AS T/B/E,

BY DEED RECORDED 03/03/95, IN BOOK 4633, AT PAGE 130, IN THE REGISTER'S OFFICE OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS.

The premises are to be sold subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, encroachments, building and zoning laws, liens, unpaid taxes, tax titles, water bills, municipal liens and assessments, rights of tenants and parties in possession, and attorney's fees and costs.

TERMS OF SALE:
 A deposit of FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND 00 CENTS (\$5,000.00) in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer's check or money order will be required to be delivered at or before the time the bid is offered. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Foreclosure Sale Agreement immediately after the close of the bidding. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid within thirty (30) days from the sale date in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer's check or other check satisfactory to Mortgagee's attorney. The Mortgagee reserves the right to bid at the sale, to reject any and all bids, to continue the sale and to amend the terms of the sale by written or oral announcement made before or during the foreclosure sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage

shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

TIME WILL BE OF THE ESSENCE.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee for REO Trust 2017-RPL1 Present Holder of said Mortgage,
 By Its Attorneys, ORLANS PC PO Box 540540 Waltham, MA 02454 Phone: (781) 790-7800 23-007632
 11/21, 11/28, 12/05/2024

Town of Goshen Conservation Commission NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING December 2, 2024 • 6 PM Town Office Building 40 Main Street, Goshen

Pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 131, Section 40 (Wetlands Protection Act), The Town of Goshen Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing **Monday, December 2, 2024, at 6:00 PM** to hear and act upon the following matter:

NOTICE OF INTENT filed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MADCR) for a beach restoration project located at the DAR State Forest Day Use Swim Beach Area located at 139-141 Moore Hill Road, Goshen, Massachusetts (Map # 2, Pacl # 101). A copy of the application and accompanying documents are on file in the Town Office.
 11/21/2024

Town of Huntington PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Town of Huntington Selectboard will conduct a public hearing in accordance with Chapter 166, Section 22 of the Massachusetts General Laws, on a petition from NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY DBA EVERSOURCE ENERGY and VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC. FOR JOINT OR IDENTICAL POLE LOCATIONS to grant petitioners joint or identical locations for and permission to construct and maintain a line of poles, wires and cables, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as they may find necessary, said poles to be erected substantially in accordance with the field plan marked 18730617-82995711 along and across the following public way:

Location – Install one (1) jointly owned pole in the area of 3 Laurel Road

Reason – To mitigate long span lengths and low wires Also, for permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables and wires in the above or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as each of said petitioners may desire for distributing purposes.

Petitioners agree to reserve space for one crossarm at a suitable point upon each of said poles for the fire and police telephone signal wires belonging to the municipality and used by it exclusively for municipal purposes.

The hearing will take place on **Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.** in the **Selectboard Office at Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, Huntington, MA.**
 11/21/2024

Montgomery Planning Board Legal Notice

In accordance with Mass. Gov Chapter 40A the town of Montgomery, MA will hold an Open Hearing **December 10, 2024 at 7:30 PM** at the Montgomery Town Hall concerning a change to the Right to Farm By-Law concerning swine, and an amendment to the Zoning By-laws concerning 'Outbuildings' definition and setbacks.

Christina Pierce, Secretary
 11/21, 11/28/2024

EARLY DEADLINES FOR PUBLIC NOTICES

Thanksgiving will bring early deadlines for all public notices to run in **TURLEY PUBLICATIONS** the week of November 25-29, 2024.

Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 2 PM for November 27 issue

- Agawam Advertiser News • Sentinel • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Thursday, November 21 at 2 PM for November 28 Issue

- Barre Gazette • Country Journal
- The Journal Register • Quaboag Current • Ware River News

Friday, November 22 at 2 PM for November 29 Issue

- Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

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

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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HELP WANTED

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SEEKING WEEKLY HOUSE-KEEPING: 1 floor - 2 baths, 1 bedroom, living room, kitchen and den. Southwick/Feeding Hills line. **413-530-6747**

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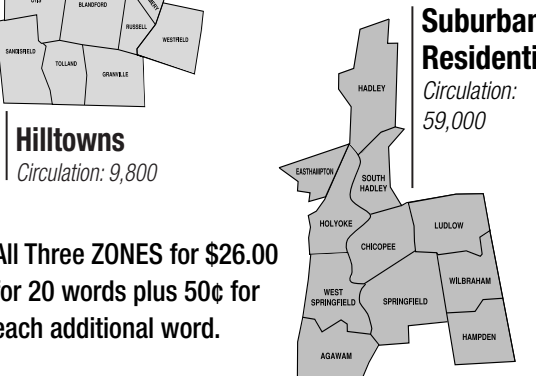
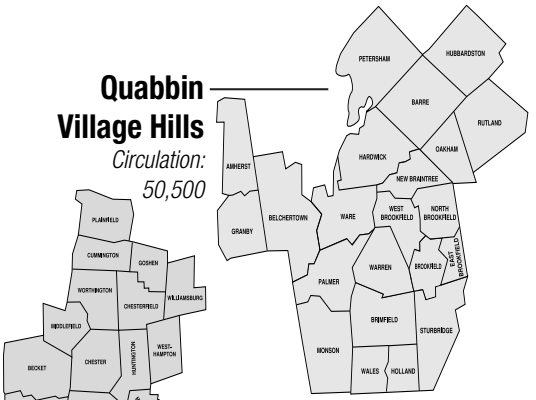
ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation,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

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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
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HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

Hikers travel to Coldbrook Reservoir boat launch



Old Roosterville Road is partially covered in dirt.

Submitted photos

In South Sandisfield just off Route 8 the old Roosterville Road continues to Colebrook, Connecticut, two miles to the state line. Hiking on the old asphalt is only hike able when the water levels are very low. We took advantage of that and hiked the entire way to the Colebrook Reservoir boat launch 3.5 miles.

Still hiking in Sandisfield the landscape starts to change, the Connecticut state line is at Mount Prospect but before that an old road veers off to the left of the old Route 8 to a bridge abutment which carries the old road parallel to old Route 8.

Normally underwater the 1953

bridge on Route 8 also gets some sunshine. Massive stumps line the old property lines. The Metropolitan District Commission, a company providing water and other services to the Greater Hartford Connecticut area, with the thought toward providing water resources for the future, in the 1930s, began buying up available land in the watershed area of the West Branch of the Farmington River.

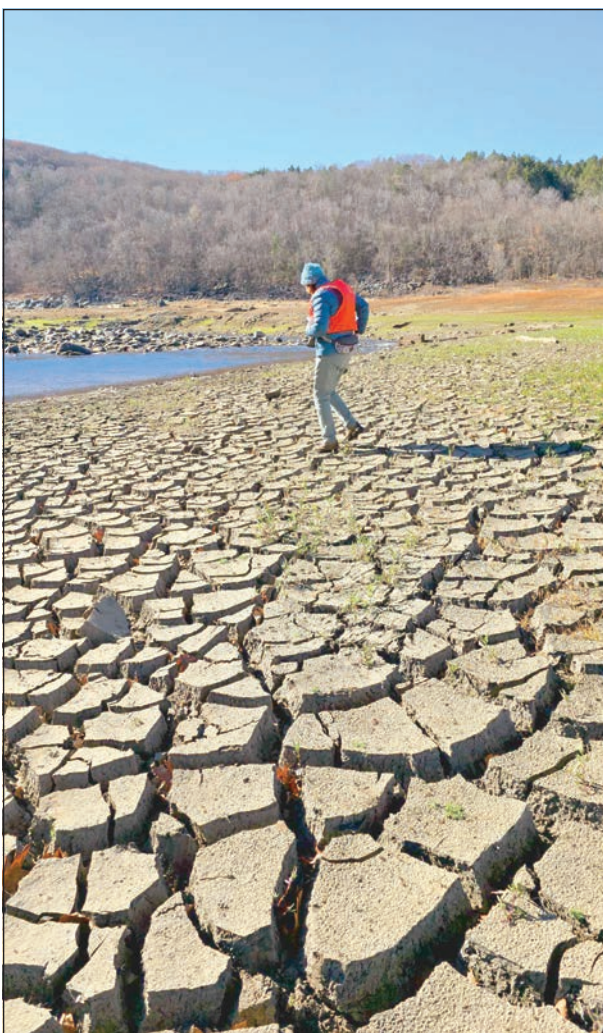
Essentially, this meant the village of Colebrook River would be drowned by the waters behind a dam constructed at a narrow gorge known as "The Hogback," just east of the Colebrook town line in the town of Hartland.



This is a 1953 poured concrete bridge on old Route 8. The Hilltown Hikers and their canine friends explore the area.



This photo shows how low the water level in the Farmington River.



The mud on the river bed is completely dried in the sun.



One of the Hilltown Hikers and a canine companion trek along the Farmington Rive in Sandisfield.



Giant willow tree stumps are line the property lines.