

# 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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## BLANDFORD

### Ferrera updates Select Board

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera updated the Select Board at the Monday, Nov. 24 meeting.

She told the board that after meeting with both the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board she was asking the board to approve two motions. The first is to authorize the Planning Board an initial \$30,000 to support their work in conjunction with the Energy Projects Siting Committee. The money will come from the original \$200,000 approved by Town Meeting Sept. 22. The second was to authorize \$15,000 from the same \$200,000 to get administrative support for outside services for the Planning Board as they review and revise the zoning bylaws.

She said, "It makes sense to use Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, but it's up to the Planning Board." The Select Board passed both motions.

She also received word that the Department of Public Utilities is reviewing the three-year

Eversource Energy Report. While this is not specific to Blandford in any way, she did submit a Public Comment.

In it she wrote that "While the Term Report documents program savings and benefits, the town is deeply concerned about the financial burden these programs impose on end-use customers, particularly residents on fixed or limited incomes. Electricity costs continue to rise across rural Western Massachusetts and purported 'savings' from energy-efficient programs are not reflected, by any measure, in reduced costs for residents."

She added that the Term Report does not show any "tangible improvements...provide assistance..." or show advantages for the communities.

She concluded with a request that the DPU assess the "practical effects" on the rural communities so the program does not "disproportionately benefit corporate interests." Both documents are on the town's website.

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## BLANDFORD

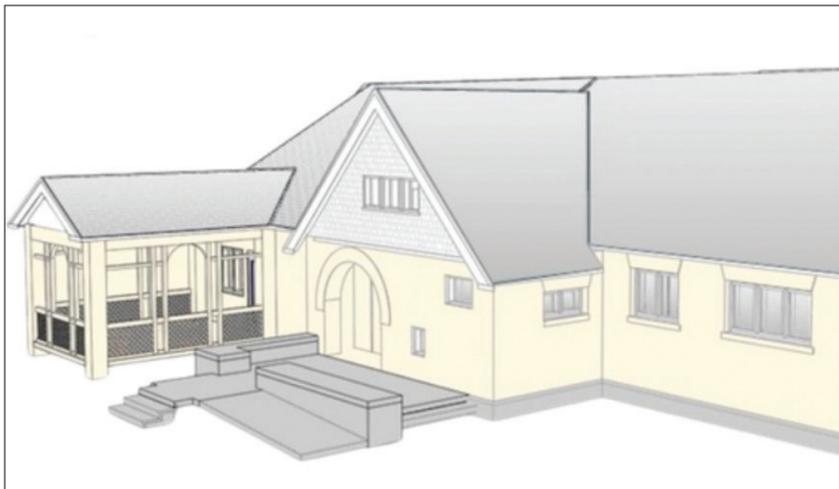
### Library project moves forward

By Nicole Daviau  
Library Director

In 1892 Blandford summer resident, Josephine Porter, presented to the town The Porter Memorial Library building in memory of her son, who passed away unexpectedly and loved reading.

Over 130 years later, the same spirit of generosity is continuing in the gift of Sumner Robbins, who has bequeathed the library funding to be used for "The Porter Memorial

Library Expansion



Top photo, a postcard of the Porter Memorial Library as it appears when new. The side porch was enclosed in the early 1950s and is the children's area. Above, this is a rendition of the proposed expansion of the Porter Memorial Library.

Submitted photos

Project." These funds, as well as the money previously donated to the Trustees by Sally (Sarah) Robbins, sister of Sumner, total \$900,000.

Longtime Blandford resident Sumner Robbins was a familiar face in Porter Memorial Library. Even into his 90s Sumner could be seen walking from his home to the library, checking out books and catching up with residents.

Library Trustee Mary Kronholm remembers Sumner telling her that he loved the little library and that "when I pass away, I will make sure you can build a bigger library." As a man of great character, who believed in the mission of libraries

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## BLANDFORD

### Select Board hears Ad Hoc committee findings

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

The Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee on Climate Leader Community Designation met with the Select Board Monday, Nov. 24 and presented their findings.

The findings and recommendations do not make any "formal commitment by the Town to pursue or apply for the designation."

Paul Dirschka said at the conclusion of the presentation, "It's in your court, folks." The committee did all the research, presented the pros and cons and benefits of achieving the Climate Leader Community status. The com-

mittee was not charged with making a recommendation one way or another.

Board member Jackie Coury said she was not able to make a decision "without absorbing" the information. The presentation in its entirety is available on the town website.

Members of the committee are chairman, Deborah Lundgren, Paul Dirschka, secretary and member Charles Benson.

Highway Department Superintendent Ray Hultay told the board he had the contract to go forward with paving the swale on Russell Stage Road and the catch basins. Cleaning the existing area

was necessary as catch basins had been buried under leaves and roadside debris causing ice flows in the area during the winter. The Highway Department cleaned the drainage areas.

There were issues with the procurement process because it was such a small job. Coury asked if this was something "we could have done ourselves?" And it was. Hultay said there is no need for a catch basin grid as the areas immediately in front of the basin will be cleared regularly.

There are multiple grants available for the Highway Department to apply for, so "we can finish some projects"

that have already been started, such as the Beech Hill Road Bridge project. He asked the board to review his application for a grant for the dirt roads project, which was not on the agenda, so he left it with the board.

Coury said it would be on the agenda for next week. Under consideration with the grant is a new dirt roller, according to Hultay.

He asked that the board talk about road bonding next week. The work on the highway bathroom will be completed and a new back flow meter will be installed. According to Hultay, he was told every town building should have a back flow meter repair kit on the premises.

The board again met with the Water Department and learned that a contract amendment is possible and they approved the reallocation of the contract amendment moving \$125,000 from water tank construction to designing a repair for the ozone treatment area at Long Pond.

Professional Engineer Michael McManus presented the information along with Water Commissioner Peter Thayer and Water Department Interim Superintendent Steven

**COMMITTEE**, page 6



Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Climate Leader Community Designation member Charles Benson, left, Chair Deborah Lundgren, center, follow along as Secretary Paul Dirschka reads the results of their research for the Select Board.

Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

## HILLTOWNS

### Hilltowners support those in need

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

A number of hilltown organizations are helping to make the holidays brighter for people, who are struggling to make ends meet.

Efforts are well underway to provide toys, clothing and food to people in need. Here's where people may go to get what they need and what they can do to help others this month. These items are available thanks to the work of Hilltown Community Health Center's Family Center, It Takes a Village, the Pioneer Valley Assembly of God Food Pantry, Gateway Regional School's National Honor Society, the Blossom Center, Hilltowns CARE and the Huntington Public Library.

For over 25 years, the Family Center and Gateway's NHS have partnered to provide toys, clothing, meals, cords of wood and other assistance to hilltown families. This year, the NHS raised a record \$4,800 from a "Boot Drive" held at the intersec-

tion of Routes 20 and 112, with the Huntington Fire Department keeping everyone safe on Saturday, Nov. 15.

"That, along with some very generous individuals and the Toys for Tots initiative make it possible for us to continue to provide toys to families," said Director of Community Programs Kim Savery. Families put in a wish list of items that their children need or want and the funding is used to purchase them. Items will be distributed through a curbside pickup or delivery on Wednesday, Dec. 10. Savery reports that families, who have not completed a wishlist yet may do so by calling her directly at 413-685-3500.

The Huntington Public Library is also helping out by supplying small stockings with sample-sized personal care items, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, hand sanitizer, dental floss, hand cream, hair ties or small toys. Each

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# BECKET

## Becket Arts Center announces upcoming news and events

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center will host an opening reception for an exhibition of work by Cornelia Henricks, one of the founding members of the BAC, on Thursday, Dec. 4 from 5-7 p.m.

This special collection showcases her artistic contributions and lasting legacy, highlighting the talent of a key figure in the organization's history. Free. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

As a participant in World Aids Day on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 4-6 p.m., the Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will present a reading of a work in progress, "Fragments" was written and performed by Jim Petosa. Petosa, an actor, director and professor, will recount the story of one couple navigating their mystical, transformative and brutal journey through the AIDS pandemic. Petosa will lead a discussion following the reading. The event is free, though donations are welcome. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

The Becket Arts Center's drum class for ages 12 and older will take place on Monday, Dec. 8 from 5-6 p.m. Rick Shrum, whose has taught African drumming for over 40 years, will introduce traditional African drums and percussion instruments and guide participants in creating stimulating, joy-filled multi-part rhythms. All instruments are provided and no experience is necessary. Drop-ins are welcome. Cost is \$15 non-members and \$10 and \$5 for members ages 12 to 18. For registration and more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

The Becket Arts Center will present a free painting demonstration by Sean McCusker on Sunday, Dec. 7 from 1-2 p.m. McCusker's glazed landscapes are made up of roughly thirty thin, transparent layers, a technique that results in glowing compositions of dark shadows suspended in light. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org). Sean McCusker will also offer these demonstrations on Sunday, Dec. 14, and Sunday Dec. 21.

The Becket Arts Center will host an evening of craft-making on Monday, Dec. 8, from 6:30-8 p.m. People are invited to bring their current project whether it's knitting, sketching or something else entirely and work alongside other local makers, sharing ideas and inspiration. Participation in Maker Monday is free. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org). The Becket Arts Center will also host maker Monday on Dec. 22.

The Becket Arts Center will offer its weekly all-levels yoga class with Rima Sala on Thursday, Dec. 11 from 9:30-10:30



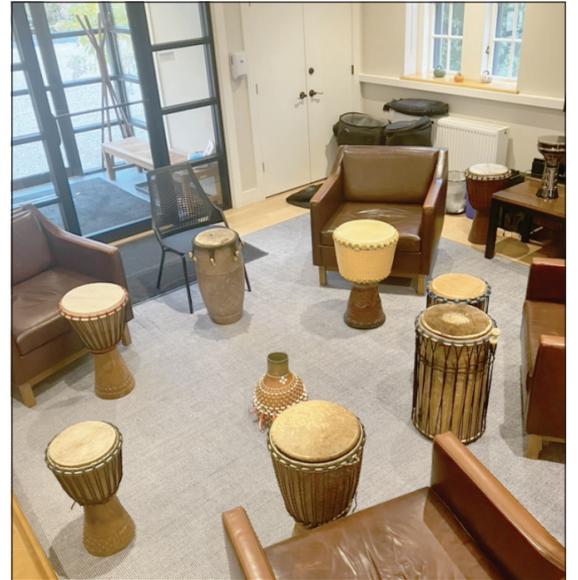
Cornelia Henricks will host an exhibition of her work on Thursday, Dec. 4 from 5-7 p.m.



The Becket Arts Center will present "The Winter Solstice in Story and Song," on Thursday, Dec. 18 from 7-8:15 p.m. with award-winning storyteller and theater artist Diane Edgecomb, along with multi-instrumentalist Tom Megan.



Becket Arts Center will hold its free, annual holiday singalong on Saturday, Dec. 20 from 6-8 p.m. Submitted photos



A drum class for ages 12 and older will take place on Monday, Dec. 8 from 5-6 p.m. with Rick Shrum, whose has taught African drumming for over 40 years.

a.m. Cost is \$5 to \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org). This class will also be held on Thursday, Dec. 18.

The Becket Arts Center will offer a wreath-making workshop on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 a.m. to noon. The Arts Center will provide all the guidance and natural materials needed to make a unique decoration for their home, though participants should feel free to bring any favorite adornments and clippers if they have them. Cost is \$10 fee for materials. Space is limited. For more information and registration, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

The Becket Arts Center will hold its annual Hanukkah celebration on Sunday, Dec. 14, in two ways. From 2-4 p.m., there will be a latke-making party at the historic Mullen House, 12 Brooker Hill Road in Becket. Then from 4-7 p.m. the Festival of Light will continue across the street at Seminary Hall, with singing, silliness and the smell

of those freshly made latkes. For more information, people may email [deborah@becketartscenter.org](mailto:deborah@becketartscenter.org). For registration, recommended for both events, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

The Becket Arts Center will present "The Winter Solstice in Story and Song," on Thursday, Dec. 18 from 7-8:15 p.m. Award-winning storyteller and theater artist Diane Edgecomb, along with multi-instrumentalist Tom Megan, will offer fascinating interpretations of the humorous and moving stories that accompany this time of the longest nights. For more information and registration (\$20 for non-members and \$15 for members), people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

The Becket Arts Center will hold its free, annual holiday singalong on Saturday, Dec. 20 from 6-8 p.m. The BAC will provide provide songbooks, while participants can bring their voices, their instruments or just their holiday cheer. All ages welcome. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

## Athenaeum holds silent auction

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., hosts a silent auction.

Bidding closes on Monday, Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. This is a way to do some holiday shopping and sup-

port the community library. People may keep checking back as new items are added. The deepest thanks to the businesses and individuals, who have generously donated items and

experiences. Donations include Barrington State Company, Berkshire Horse Works, Studio M Salon and Whaonah Country Club.

People may visit [www.becketathenaeum.org](http://www.becketathenaeum.org).

## CHESTER

### Railway holds Christmas party Dec. 7

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

CHESTER – The Chester Railway Station, 10 Prospect St., President David Pierce announces that the station's annual Christmas Party will be held on Sunday, Dec. 7 from 1-4 p.m.

Admission is free, although donations are always welcome. The party includes refreshments, live music and a special visit for children. "It's our annual gift to the town," Pierce said.

"The town supports us all year and we are reciprocating."

Pierce said that both Santa and Mrs. Claus will be returning to the station this year. Weather permitting, they will arrive in a tricked out ATV "sleigh." "It's really quite a sight," Pierce said. They should arrive at around 1:30 p.m. and there will be a story time in the Children's Boxcar while children wait. Toy trains will move around the Christmas tree.

Pierce said this event has been going on for a long

time. Originally, it started out as an evening event, mostly geared toward adults. About 20 years ago, they changed it to an afternoon occasion with great success. They see a couple of hundred people a year, Pierce said.

Local favorites the Pitoniak Brothers Band will provide musical entertainment. This acoustic trio performs regularly in the area, including at schools, community events, pubs and local fairs.

Food and beverages will be offered.

## RUSSELL

### Blue light parade happens Dec. 13

RUSSELL – Santa and Mrs. Claus will be coming on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 4:30 p.m. from the Police Department to the Town Hall by the Russell/Montgomery Police Department in their blue light parade.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be at the Town Hall from 4:45-5:45 p.m. Hot chocolate and popcorn will be available outside of the Town Hall.

Parade route begins at the Russell Fire Station at

the end of Main Street, down Main Street, left onto Route 20, down Route 20, left onto Old Westfield Road, down Old Westfield Road and back to Main Street. There is no parking along the parade route. The Catholic Church parking lot will be accessible for parking. There is also limited handicap parking in the Post Office parking lot. People may call Missy Castro at 413-454-5678 for any questions.

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## HILLTOWNS

# MassDOT lists I-90 roadwork

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

All work is weather dependent.

In Stockbridge, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 6.4 now through Thursday, Dec. 4 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. In Becket, bridge painting work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound and westbound at mile marker 20.0 now through Friday, Dec. 5 from 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

In Blandford, guardrail work will be conducted on I-90 eastbound from mile marker 27.0 to mile marker 30.0 from now through Friday, Dec. 5 from 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 westbound at mile marker 26.2 now through Friday, Dec. 5 from 7 a.m.-

3:30 p.m.

In Montgomery and Russell, bridge repairs will be conducted on I-90 westbound at mile marker 36.0 on Thursday, Dec. 4 from 6 a.m.-noon.

Appropriate signage and law enforcement details will be in place to guide drivers through the work area. Drivers traveling through the area should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

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

## HILLTOWNERS

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child receiving gifts through the Family Center will have their own little stocking of items. Members of the public can help by donating sample-sized items to the library by Saturday, Dec. 6 for this project.

Also hard at work this season is Takes a Village, located at 2 East Main St., Huntington. For Thanksgiving, they were able to distribute turkeys and gift cards for side dishes to Moltenbrey's Market in Huntington. This was made possible thanks to the Huntington Lions Club and Kinetic Engine Systems in Westfield.

ITAV is pulling together a Holiday Hope Week, where they will distribute toys over four days in December. Director Lisa Dana said that families need to pre-register and can call It Takes a Village at 413-650-3640 to do so. There are still some slots available specifically for hilltown families.

If people are able to donate new toys in this effort, Dana reports that they are most in need of things for ages 12 to 18. Cash donations can also be very helpful for filling in gaps and providing last minute support.

A new project for ITAV this year is their Community Cupboard, run by Erin Judge, which provides free food to the community. "This food is either approaching or just past its sell by date. It may have damaged packaging or was received by mistake," explained Judge. Working with several food reclamation

groups, the food is brought to Huntington and distributed at no charge through ITAV.

In addition to addressing hunger, food that cannot be sold is kept from going to waste in landfills. They receive food from a group in Cummington early in the week. On Thursday evenings, they drive to pick up food that is collected by another individual in Belchertown. Food is available at no charge at ITAV during the day on Tuesdays, Tuesday evenings, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays and from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sundays. Members of Hilltowns CARE help pick up and unload food in Cummington and Belchertown, but more help is always welcome. Especially needed are people who have a truck or van and can make trips to Belchertown for food pickup.

It Takes a village runs a basic needs "free store" in their 6,000 square foot village closet and at high need school districts. They specialize in clothing for ages newborn to adult. They are the only diaper bank in the hilltowns and last year gave out over 100,000 packages of diapers. Stop by during hours or call to make an appointment to come in during the week if people need clothing or early childhood items such as high chairs, books and gently used toys. The organization also provides workforce training and home visiting during the early months of a baby's life. ITAV will be closed from Christmas to Sunday, Jan. 4.

## Santa arrives via fire truck

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Recreation Committee will sponsor a fist with Santo on Saturday, Dec. 20 at 3 p.m. at the gazebo on Huntington town green.

Santa will arrive by fire truck courtesy of the Huntington Fire Department before traveling through town. Refreshment will be provided by the Recreation Committee. Gingerbread house decorating takes place Dec. 20.

## Gingerbread house decorating set to take place on Dec. 20

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Community Events Committee will offer gingerbread house kits to decorate on Saturday, Dec. 20 at 2 p.m. in Stanton Hall. They will be limited to one per family. Families must pre-register by

Sunday, Dec. 14.

Kits are limited and will be available on a first come-first served basis. People may call Vicki at 413-667-0085 or email [communityevents@huntingtonma.us](mailto:communityevents@huntingtonma.us), leave name and phone number.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

## HUNTINGTON

# Community events committee sponsors holiday tour of lights

HUNTINGTON – On Thursday, Dec. 18 through Sunday, Dec. 21 the Community Events Committee would like to extend an invitation to everyone to enjoy the Holiday Lights of Huntington.

People may drive

around town at their leisure to see some holiday lights and decorations. People, who have lights on their house they would like to share, may have their address added to the map as soon as possible. The map will be posted on Facebook by Thursday,

Dec 18. The drive around begins Thursday, Dec. 18 and ends Sunday Dec. 21. People may call Vicki at 413-667-0085, email [communityevent@huntingtonma.us](mailto:communityevent@huntingtonma.us) or Facebook messenger Huntington Community Events Committee to be added to the map.



## Domestic Violence Task Force meeting planned for Dec. 10

HUNTINGTON – The Southern Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 10 from 3-4:30 p.m. at Gateway High School, 12 Littleville Road, second floor Career

Center. Co-coordinators are Donna Larocque and Monica Moran.

For more information, people may email [SouthernHillsDVTaskForce@gmail.com](mailto:SouthernHillsDVTaskForce@gmail.com).

## PLAINFIELD

# Plainfield Volunteer Firefighter's Association elects new president

PLAINFIELD – This past month, the Plainfield Volunteer Firefighter's Association elected a new president, replacing Dan Shearer, who stepped down due to his new "day job" responsibilities.

Shearer does continue as a fire officer for the fire department and Emergency Management Director for the town of Plainfield. The association selected 21-year-old Nathan

Wooldridge as its new president at its annual meeting in November.

Wooldridge is not new to the association and fire department as he joined as a junior firefighter becoming a regular firefighter once he turned 18. He is a valuable member of the department, trained and certified as a first responder/CPR, completed the County "Basic 6" fire course and a member of the

Hilltown RIT team.

Fortunately, Wooldridge joins a well-established leadership of the PVFA, as secretary/vice president Debbie Stevens, an EMT-B in the fire department and treasurer Andy Stevens, a captain in the department, were re-elected to their positions for the next year. Thanks to Wooldridge for stepping up to assume this important position.

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Christmas will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in **TURLEY PUBLICATIONS** the week of December 22-26, 2025:  
**Wednesday, December 17 at 2 PM for December 25 issue**  
• Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times  
**Thursday, December 18 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue**  
• Agawam Advertiser News  
• Sentinel • Quaboag Current • The Journal Register  
**Friday, December 19 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue**  
• Ware River News • Barre Gazette  
**Monday, December 22 at 2 PM for December 26 Issue**  
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## OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN



## Is Social Security really a 'good deal?'

Dear Rusty:

*You've said in the past that most people recoup their SS contributions within five years of starting benefits, thus Social Security "is an exceptionally good deal."*

*Your calculation is correct but misleading; if it were not, SS would have been insolvent long ago. I will, in fact, get "my" contributions back in about five years, but my employer's contributions will take another five years and that is money that my employer could have been paying me, so they are really "my" contributions. But even that ignores the time value of money.*

*I did a calculation as if my contributions, along with those of my employer, were invested in an account earning 5% per year. That would provide me the equivalent of SS income for 24 years, approximately what my life expectancy was when I retired. So, it's not a bad deal, but it is hardly exceptional. It is roughly the equivalent of me investing that money throughout my career and using the total to buy an annuity.*

*Of course, Social Security does have the advantage of certainty, at least until it goes broke. My portfolio would not earn a steady 5% every year, though that is at the low end of what financial managers would expect over a long period. And it does force people to save, many of whom would otherwise make no provision for retirement.*

**Signed: Realistic Senior**

Dear Realistic:

Thanks very much for your feedback on my previous article. I think it's important to draw a distinction for SS contributions made by an employer, because that is not money the individual personally pays, but rather an obligation for employers to help fund the Social Security program.

Without that federal obligation, it is doubtful that employers would, instead, provide employees with equivalent additional compensation, so the thought that these are really your contributions is not a fair assessment. Indeed, they are contributions which happen to be tied to your earnings level (to a cap), for which employers receive relief on their corporate income tax and likely would not make if not required by law.

As you have noted, Social Security has the advantage of certainty, something which is lacking when it comes to investing the equivalent amounts in the financial markets. And, as you have hinted, there

exists a substantial failure by future American retirees to save adequately for their retirement, a problem well known in most financial circles. Thus, the certainty of Social Security makes it a crucial part of everyone's retirement planning and it will be there.

Despite all the angst attributed to the current financial issues facing the program, there is little doubt that Social Security is here to stay. The question is what reform is needed to make the program fully solvent for generations of future Americans? The Association of Mature American Citizens has developed a proposal to sensibly reform Social Security and avoid the currently projected 2033 date that the SS Trust Funds are expected to be depleted, which will necessitate an across-the-board cut for everyone.

We have little doubt that the reform needed will happen; it would be political suicide for Congress if it did not and hopefully soon. You can read about AMAC's proposed solution at this link by visiting [www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee](http://www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee).

The Association of 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 of Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit [amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC. Again, thank you for your feedback and commentary. Please know that we very much appreciate your thoughts and are always willing to discuss these issues.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).*



## GUEST COLUMN

## Wreaths and swags for one and all

For the last two weeks we've been busy decorating Old Sturbridge Village for their Christmas by Candlelight program.

The garland, wreaths, bows and swags are all up, and the planters have been filled with greens. It was fast-paced fun, and oh so rewarding. The museum looks absolutely magical.

I filled planters side by side with a coworker who, in her 30 plus years, has never done this part of the job with me. As we stuck greens and stood back to assess our work, it occurred to me that I've grown up making all of these decorations, like my parents before me!

I had assumed everyone else had too, but here we had Nina, who in her 60s, was at it for the first time. If you find yourself ready to make your own decorations, here are a few pointers from the archives.

My Dad was the wreath-maker in the family, and usually a post Thanksgiving walk in the woods would yield his raw materials. The wreaths he made would be taken back

to decorate a college dorm or whatever apartment my older siblings would return to after Thanksgiving break some 40 plus years ago.

One wreath would also make its way to the front door of our little red house, too.

Decorated with a red ribbon and a few pine cones, it really was something so simple and so beautiful in the same right.

His approach is the same one I'll recommend today.

Start with a wire coat hanger bent into a circle and attach some pliable wire to it. Then, wrap little bunches of greens to the base one after another.

**GARDEN**, page 9



By Ellenor Downer

A Brimfield resident sent an email to report seeing a golden-crowned kinglet on Nov. 17 in a dwarf Alberta spruce tree in front of his house.

He said, "[It was] very active, but I got to see the bright yellow crown patch."

Golden-crowned kinglets are a small bird, not much larger than a hummingbird. The male is boldly marked with a black eyebrow stripe and flashy lemon-yellow crest.

They spend much of their time high up in dense spruce or fir foliage and that is the place to find them.

Their high, thin call notes and song is often heard before catching sight of them.

The Brimfield resident called them "very active." They can survive 40 degrees below Fahrenheit nights. Sometimes huddling together for warmth.

They breed in the far north and montane west and



Golden-crowned kinglet

visit most of North America during winter. Although it used to nest almost exclusively in boreal spruce-fir forests, the golden-crowned kinglet has expanded its breeding range southward into conifer stands of the Midwest and Appalachians.

They usually raises two large broods of young, despite the short nesting season of the northern boreal forest. The female feeds her first brood only up until the day after they leave the nest. She then starts laying the

second set of eggs while the male takes care of the first brood. The male manages to feed eight or nine nestlings himself and he occasionally feeds the incubating female too.

An interesting fact about golden-crowned kinglet's is each nostril is covered by a single, tiny feather.

Adult males flash their orange crown when excited; otherwise it is usually concealed.

**BACKYARD**, page 5

# Country Journal TEAM



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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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## Country Journal welcomes Election letters to the editor

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

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

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

### Campaign news

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

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

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

# OPINION

## HILLTOWN HISTORY

### Pennies going to heaven

By Deborah Daniels  
Correspondent

You might have heard that pennies will no longer pay for your thoughts.

That is because they will no longer be made; the last ones were struck Nov. 12 at the Philadelphia Mint. And those ones were designer pennies that will be auctioned off Dec. 12 in sets of three, one being a gold penny. They have the Greek omega symbol stamped right on them. Yes omega symbolizing the end, the end of pennies.

How many of you have happy memories of buying fireballs, squirrel nuts and licorice for a penny? No matter how bad things got as a child, chances are you had a penny to buy a piece of candy to reverse things.

We got our penny candy right there at McKinney's farm store in Huntington. Well that day is not quite here yet because there are currently 300 billion pennies in circulation. So retailers may want to scheme about rounding up prices to eliminate those pesky pennies but they would be wise to wait. Don't you hoard them either. They are still legal tender. They will be phased out of use over time.

How about some penny history? The first penny made in America in 1787 was the Fugio copper penny. It had an image of the sun shining its light on a sundial with the words "Mind Your Business" printed on it.

Doesn't that sound like Ben Franklin's advice? They believe he designed it. The word fugio is Latin for I flee/fly referring to time or your money flying by. It has 15 rings linked together in a circle design with the patriotic words, "We are one" on the back.

The next penny that was minted in 1793 had Lady Liberty's head with flowing hair on the front and

the 13 linked circles on the back. It was the size of a quarter and made of 100% copper. There were some changes made to Lady Liberty over the years, but she was featured till Abraham Lincoln became center stage beginning in 1909. President Roosevelt selected Abe and he had Victor David Brenner, an engraver from Lithuania, put Lincoln's image on the penny. Enterprising urchins proceeded to hawk the new pennies, three for five cents on every street corner.

The public was aghast at this brazen signature on the pennies and saw it as Brenner trying to advertise his business. So the initials were taken off the penny. Fortunately for coin collectors - 484,000 coins were struck before the San Francisco mint stopped production of the pennies with his initials on it. If you have a 1909 penny with VDB initials on it, keep it. You can take to the bank, make that you can buy the bank with it.

Another change in penny production came during WWII in 1943. Copper was needed in the production of munitions so pennies were made of steel with a zinc coating. A magnet will pick up a steel penny not so a copper penny and the pennies appear a steel gray color.

While these pennies are rare, even rarer are the first copper pennies made in 1943. For these pennies were still made of copper before the war effort switched to steel pennies. A copper 1943 penny would be a collector's dream come true because they are that rare.

Now you may be wondering what makes a penny desirable, well believe it or not it is the pennies that have a mistake on them that was made in production. These



Left, an Indian head penny dated 1906. Right, Fugio copper penny with a date of circa 1780-1790s.



Four designs depicting President Lincoln's life on the 2009 penny.

are known as "error coins." One such error is the double die mistake where the words like "E Pluribus Unum" (translation Out of Many One) appear to be double stamped.

There is not a single clear image, but a double image like when you have had too much holiday punch. So if you have a penny that has some blurring of the letters or image this may get you some vacation money you weren't expecting!

A pre 1982 penny contained 2.20 cents worth of copper and zinc. That value went down to 0.55 cents worth of copper after 1982 because the penny was only

plated with copper. The Mints were penny pinching. Coins were being melted down for their metal value and what's more they were being exported too. The motto "In God We Trust" was placed on pennies in 1865 while Lincoln was President. Certainly that was a time to hold dear to higher beliefs while a civil war raged on. The shield design that is on back of all current pennies represents a Union shield used during the Civil War with 13 vertical stripes for 13 original states with a horizontal bar on top showing all were joined together in support of the federal government. A bit of our history



Ursa Mater a 12 ft. bear made of 205,000 pennies that is displayed in San Jose.



A 1943 steel penny is in the second row, far left. Turley Publications photos by Deborah Daniels

lives on our pennies.

So why end the penny? A Gallup survey in 2002 found 2% of Americans threw their pennies away. Gasp, the current copper plated penny weighs 2.5 grams and when they were 95% copper they weighed 3.11 grams. It costs 3.69 cents to make a penny whose value is 1 cent. Congress would rather

squeeze them right out of existence. Is the nickel next? It costs 13 cents to produce a nickel. Loafers will never be dressed again. You will not be able to check your car tire tread depth with a penny and what about all those wishing fountains waiting for a penny to drop in?

Retailers stand back. Save a Penny and watch your riches grow. Happy Holidays

### BACKYARD

from page 4

The oldest golden-crowned kinglet on record was a male and at least 6 years, 4 months old when it was recaptured and re-released by a Minnesota bird bander in 1976.

#### Other Brimfield birds

This month the Brimfield resident saw a Carolina wren flipping over leaves in his garden. He said, "We joined the 'leave the leaves' movement and don't do a major fall clean-up to benefit the critters that survive the winter under the leave and in the other material left in the garden."

He also noticed robins and cedar waxwings in the crab apple tree in his yard. He said, "We don't usually see these species eating the crab apples until later in the winter. Fortunately there is a bumper crop of fruit on the trees this year. A couple

of robins were also on the ground searching for food and I saw one robin at some pokeberry aka, pokeweed, eating the fruit. He has not seen any water fowl at the local ponds he visits regularly.

#### Lots of bluebirds

I received an email from a reader, who said his wife saw approximately 40 bluebirds on the causeway stone-wall at Quabbin Reservoir.

#### Bald eagles

My daughter, Paula, took photos of a bald eagle in a field along the Ware River, on Church Street in Ware recently.

I saw a bald eagle perched in a tree on the shore of the Ware River not far from the Gilbertville line. It may have been the same eagle.

#### Migrating geese

I saw a large flock of

Canada geese in a small, pond along Route 32 in Ware on Nov. 15. They covered over half the pond.

#### Helping birds

When it is time to take the Christmas tree down, place it outside to offer shelter to birds and other critters. Some people hang peanut butter filled pine cones rolled in birdseed or pieces of suet to provide some high energy food. Planting evergreen trees especially spruce and firs are away to attract the golden-crowned kinglets and offer a living shelter year round.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

### News, photo publication policy

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

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

Deadline is Friday at NOON.



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

**First Congregational Church of Chester**  
334 Skyline Trail, Chester, MA 01011  
Pastor Susan Borsella  
Service with Live Music: 10 a.m. - Sunday  
Coffee and Sweets Social:  
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

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

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

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

**CHURCH DIRECTORY**

**Your Community Church**

**New Boston Congregational Church**  
4 Sandisfield Rd., PO Box 81  
Sandisfield, MA 01255  
Services held twice monthly, check website:  
www.newbostoncongregationalchurch.org

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

**Pioneer Valley Mennonite Fellowship**  
Deacon Jerald Reinford  
400 Huntington Rd., Russell, MA 01071  
(413) 297-6037  
Sunday worship at 10 a.m.  
Visitors appreciated.

## BLANDFORD

## COA to hold holiday lunch

BLANDFORD – People may sip some holiday eggnog Friday, Dec. 12 at noon at the Council on Aging luncheon at noon at the Town Hall.

In addition to the hol-

iday eggnog, there will be Bloody Mary deviled eggs, Caesar salad, turkey Tetrazzini with gravy followed by a peppermint brownie trifle.

People may call the

COA at 413-848-2479, extension 400 to make a reservation.

There is no charge for the luncheon, but a \$5 donation or more is recommended.

## LIBRARY

and service to the community, Sumner was true to his word. This generosity, love of community, and belief in the importance of libraries, will be commemorated in the new building with the “Sally and Sumner Robbins Community Room”.

Because of the significant support of Sumner and Sally Robbins and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, if residents vote to approve the construction phase, the town will be paying only 15% of the total cost of the project: \$1,166,622. This can be paid for without raising taxes and covers everything even furniture -and includes contingency amounts for unexpected changes and escalation costs, portions of the budget that will go right back to the town if unused.

The groundwork for this project began over a decade ago when the town created a Library Building Stabilization Fund and every year since residents

have voted to contribute to that account at Annual Town Meeting. At a special town meeting in March of 2024 residents unanimously approved the first step of the Library Expansion project, applying for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Planning and Design Grant, which provided 50% of the funds for this phase.

In October of this year, three months ahead of schedule, Blandford was the first community to submit plans to the MBLC, where they were approved without any edits and many positive comments. On Nov. 12 the library had received news that the MBLC Construction Grant, if voted for by the town, will be in the amount of \$5,479,539. This grant covers 75% of the eligible costs of constructing the new library, the highest percentage allowed by the program.

For over 130 years the one room Library has been

a beloved point of community pride and an icon of the town with its Blandford/Kaolin clay bricks, vaulted ceiling and diamond paned windows. But beyond the structure the community has a love for the services the library provides to residents, services that have expanded foot traffic and circulation to new levels every year and that require more space. Additionally, the building was not built for current fire and safety codes and is not an accessible building. Without expansion the library may be forced to close or provide necessary upgrades, which have been estimated to cost \$1.5 million. These upgrades would not include adding additional space or services.

The expanded Porter Memorial Library will also be built with bricks and held together buy generosity, stretching from Josephine Porter in 1892, to the MBLC and Sally and Sumner Robbins.

from page 1

## SELECT BOARD

As far as fines for unregistered vehicles go, the town cannot assess any fines for them. “The town does not have the necessary statutory language to issue non-criminal disposition of fines for unregistered vehicles,” said Ferrera. The current bylaw as it stands now does not allow this.

Responding to T.J.

Cousineau’s question about how the town can get rid of unregistered vehicles now, Ferrera said the only way to do this would be to file through the District Court.

She had one response from Rockwell Roofing, a firm on the State Contract listing, regarding quotes for a new Town Hall roof. Three firms were contact-

ed. The upshot is the building needs a whole new roof and the skylights should be removed. There may be some “short term” temporary remedies, which she will pass on to the board when she hears from the roofing company.

The Tax Classification Hearing will be on Monday, Dec. 1.

from page 1

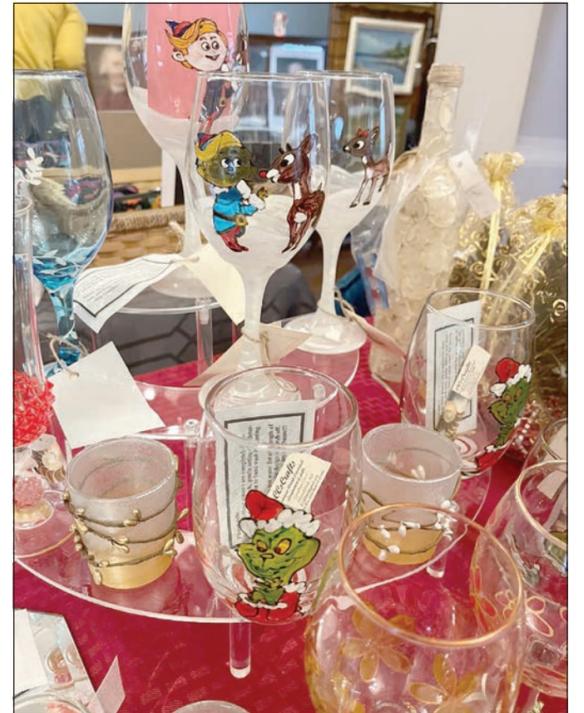
## Historical Society to hold craft fair

BLANDFORD – Becky Greene and Jess Ripley, organizers of the Annual Craft Fair to be held at the Historical Society on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., announced the participants.

The craft fair will be held at the Historical Society is at the top of Main Street, a short walk from the Town Hall.

Local water color artist Susan Racine will offer selections of her work. Linda Coffey, a Blandford naturalist photographer will have her pictures in calendar format for the coming year. Cobble Mountain Country Crafts by Katelyn Lucia will feature seasonal wood crafts. Dave Barney will bring his wooden ornaments, signs, jewelry holders and small furniture.

Ornaments and home décor will be at the Three Sisters booth, by Bonnie Lemme, Kim Blanchette and Mandy LaBrecque. Donna Britton’s Morning Skye Farm will feature knitted socks, mittens and pottery. Cindi Carr’s C and C Crafts will have hand painted glassware and ornaments.



Hand painted glassware and ornaments by Cindy Carr will be for sale at the Blandford Historical Society craft fair on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Turley Publications photo by Mary Kronholm

Becky Green’s Around the Bend Creations will present handcrafted, one of a kind jewelry and of course Jess Ripley will offer many maple products from Ripley’s Maple Corner Farm

as well as canned foods. The Historical Society will also have a table with information about all the upcoming events that will mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

## COMMITTEE

Gronon.

Library Director Nicole Daviau gave a report on the library’s expansion project, citing the work already accomplished and the benefit of the Sumner Robbins gift for the project. Daviau said that David Hopson, Library Building Committee Chair and assessor, has positioned the town in a finan-

cial position such that at this time there is no reason to expect a tax increase to cover the remaining cost of the expansion project, some \$1,166,622. She explained that the warrant article, although it states a cost higher, according to regulations from the MBLC, the town vote covers the total cost.

With that, the board

signed the warrant for the Special Town Meeting on Dec. 9 to vote on the expansion plan.

In other business, the board acknowledged the \$230,000 gift from the estate of Sumner Robbins, who died in April 2024. The gift is for the perpetual care of the North Blandford Cemetery on Blair Road.

from page 1

## PITTSFIELD

## Downtown Pittsfield hosts festive frolic event this weekend

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. will host the Downtown Pittsfield Festive Frolic on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5 and Dec. 6.

Activities will include the city of Pittsfield’s Park Square Tree Lighting Ceremony, free hot chocolate and photo ops with The Grinch at Otto’s, The Berkshire Bazaar hosted by Thistle ‘n Thorn Floral at The Holiday Inn, photo ops with Santa, a free kids’ paint and sip, the city of Pittsfield’s Wreath Art Auction at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, and much more.

The City of Pittsfield’s Park Square Tree Lighting Ceremony will be on Friday, Dec. 5 starting at 6 p.m. People may join Santa, Mrs. Claus and the city of Pittsfield’s Recreation Department for this festive holiday tradition. The Pittsfield High School Chorus will perform a variety of carols around 5:45 p.m. before the ceremony begins and Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive following the tree lighting. Lipton Market will be providing free hot chocolate and coffee in Park Square during the event.

Those planning to attend

the ceremony are asked to bring non-perishable food items that will be donated to the Christian Center’s food pantry.

Artists Peter Vacchina and Robert Markey will be creating holiday-themed ice sculptures in Park Square beginning at 5 p.m. Their live ice sculpting will continue throughout the evening for attendees to watch, subject to favorable weather conditions.

Otto’s Kitchen and Comfort, 95 East St., will be providing free hot chocolate and photo ops with the Grinch from 5-8 pm on Friday, Dec. 5.

The Festive Frolic continues Saturday, Dec. 6, with The Berkshire Bazaar hosted by Thistle ‘n Thorn Floral at The Holiday Inn, 1 West St., from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Shop handmade goods and thoughtful gifts from dozens of local makers, artists and small businesses.

Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church will host a free kids’ paint & sip on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 12:30-3 p.m. in the auditorium at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 67 East St.

This free holiday-themed paint and sip is best suited for ages 5 to 12,

although younger and older children are welcome. All materials, snacks and juice will be provided. Children will be provided with a small canvas and wooden ornament for painting. The Berkshire Museum will be joining in on the fun with a free yarn snowflake ornament craft. Children are welcome to drop in anytime over the course of the event, and all children must be accompanied by an adult. The auditorium is on the second floor of the parish house, and the entrance is on Allen Street.

Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. will also host photo ops with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 12:30-3 p.m., outside in Dunham Mall at 100 North St. Santa will be welcoming children and families to visit with him and take photos. People may bring their own camera or cell phone to capture photos of this special moment. There will not be a photographer on site.

Hand Crafted, 26 Dunham Mall, will be handing out free hot chocolate and cider to all in attendance, and Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. will be handing out free Winston ornaments while supplies last.

Berkshire Community Action Council invites

you to help support the Elf Children’s Warm Clothing Program by bringing a new winter coat or pair of boots to Dunham Mall for a child in need. If they do, they’ll earn an entry into a raffle to win a luxurious one-night stay at Hotel on North. BCAC will also be giving away free cookies to all. The raffle drawing will be at 3 p.m. and people do not need to be present to win.

Hot Plate Brewing Co., 1 School St., will present free live music in their taproom from 1-3 p.m. featuring JJ Slater, a song-singer, guitar-picker, and storyteller from the swampy side of New England.

The Berkshire Carousel at 50 Center St. will celebrate the Festive Frolic with Donkey Day on Saturday, Dec. 6 from noon-5 p.m. There will be free rides in celebration of Missy the Donkey sponsored by author Kevin O’ Hara. Kevin will introduce his latest book and there will be a special dance performance.

Solarium Plant Shop, 46 West St., invites children to drop-in to make free dried floral ornaments from 12:30-3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6.

Indie Readery and Records, 314 North St. and Drag Story Hour

Berkshires will present a holiday-themed Drag Story Hour with Sativo Green on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 1-2:30 p.m.

The Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield’s Public Library, 1 Wendell Avenue, will offer free drop-in activities for all ages from 12:30-3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6. The Children’s Library will host a fun winter craft, the Young Adult Department will offer a button-making craft and there will be festive bookmark making for adults and teens in the Blake Room.

This year, the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, 28 Renne Avenue, will host its 11th annual Wreath Art Auction to benefit the Pittsfield Community Food Pantry on a Saturday. People may join the Office of Cultural Development for this holiday tradition on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 4-6 p.m. Grab and go wreaths will be available starting at 4 p.m. and the top items will be auctioned off at 5:30 p.m.

Dozens of local artists have donated their talent, time, and materials to create one-of-a-kind, original holiday wreaths, centerpieces, kissing balls, and more. There will also be a raffle to win some amazing gifts from



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## SCHOOLS &amp; YOUTH

## Gateway Regional High School promotes kindness week

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

HUNTINGTON – “Kindness costs nothing, but means everything. Spread it far and wide.” So said the Gateway Regional School flyer outlining activities for the half-week before Thanksgiving, dubbed Kindness Week.

Monday had counseling staff handing out positive affirmations to students in the hallway. On Tuesday, students and staff took a minute upon arrival or at lunch and wrote things they appreciated about Gateway on paper hearts at the “Appreciation Station” in the lobby.

The number of hearts that were posted on a bulletin board behind the station was growing throughout Tuesday. Tuesday also included a special treat for staff in the teacher’s dining room, which was fresh apples and a host of toppings to create a special, healthy treat. Wednesday, the half-day and last day of the shortened week, featured a kindness activity at lunch where students filled out kindness or thank you notes to anyone they wanted to give them to. Students could deliver the notes or ask staff to deliver them if that was more comfortable.

It was also the last week for staff to hand out kindness coupons, which were given to students caught in the act of being kind to others. The homeroom or advisory group collecting the most coupons will win a special prize.

Staff for the school, covering grades 6-8, also had their own “underground” staff spirit week to see how many students would figure



Students Grace R., Andrew C. and Max P. sign their hearts at Gateway's Appreciation Station, part of Kindness Week at Gateway Regional School on Tuesday, Nov. 25.

Turley Publications Photos by Wendy Long

out what was going on. Spirit Weeks typically have students doing things like wearing pajamas one day or doing a crazy hat and hair day the next.

The grades with the highest number of students taking part earn points toward the school’s annual Spirit Trophy. Staff got in on the fun during kindness week, wearing neon clothing on Monday and sports attire on Wednesday. Tuesday had staff doing a mismatch day and Assistant Principal Val Zeh did her part wearing different shoes, socks

and patterns of clothing that typically aren’t seen together. Tuesday also included the theme “anything but a cup” and had staff drinking coffee or water out of things like pencil holders to see how many students would take note.

Midweek had the appreciation station nearly half-full of hearts with students noting appreciation for Gateway’s counselors, smiles, friends and the food served in the cafeteria, among others.

Kindness Week was a new project for the two and a half days before the holiday

break. For many years, the week had been dedicated to college and career activities. According to guidance counselor Emily Johnson, those activities still happen but have shifted to other times in the school year.

For example, they found that college admissions staff were reluctant to come to Gateway that week for a college fair because they were already beginning to review early action applications by mid-November. Instead, Gateway students went to a college fair sponsored by the Massachusetts College



Gateway Regional High School counselor Jess Armitage took a moment to build and enjoy an apple sundae during a staff appreciation event on Tuesday of Kindness Week at Gateway.

Consortium that was held at Westfield High School in October. They also held a Free Application for Federal Student Aid night for all families of students in grades 9 to 12 and Johnson also offers drop-in sessions for those needing help with scholarship applications and creating their FAFSA accounts. She also works with students on their college essays.

Gateway now holds an end of year pep rally to celebrate all of the seniors’ next steps after high school, not just ones going onto college.

They have a banner that says “I have a plan for my future” that hangs in the hallway that all seniors sign when they’ve decided on their path forward.

This is the second special event organized by the counseling department at Gateway. According to School Adjustment Counselor Jessica Armitage, a bullying awareness week was held in October and the staff are planning a mental health awareness week in May that will include self-care for both students and staff.

## Pierogi fundraiser prompts PTO predecessor participation

By Janine Modestow  
Guest Columnist

WORTHINGTON – Butter is sizzling in a saucepan, the dough hook in the massive Kitchen Aid mixer is spinning around, the pots of water are boiling on the stove, and prepared dough is being flattened as it passes through a pasta attachment.

Meanwhile, in the school cafeteria of R.H. Conwell, 147 Huntington Road, between three and five people sit around a table, filling circles of dough with savory fillings, cheese and potato or cabbage and carefully, oh-so-carefully, pinching the edges tightly. This is not a professional restaurant. It’s the Worthington community coming together under the direction of Alex Lak to make pierogi as a fundraiser for the R.H. Conwell Parent Teachers Organization.

Three weeks before

Thanksgiving, community members gathered in the R.H. Conwell kitchen to begin making over 2,400 pierogi. Due to an overwhelming number of orders, Lak, his wife Lynn, and daughter Emily, who teaches at the school, gathered friends and fellow empty-nesters, former R.H. Conwell parents, to begin making pierogi a week before the planned date.

The group, wearing hairnets that made them all look a little silly, began on Nov. 7. Julia Sharron, Cara Thayer and Tom Wisnauckas chopped cabbage, while Tom’s wife Janine diced onions. Pat Kennedy sauteed the onions while Alex boiled the cabbage before adding the sauerkraut and mixing in the magic seasoning. The kitchen and cafeteria were filled with teasing, joking, laughing and lots of camaraderie and the cabbage filling was prepared

for Saturday.

Saturday and Sunday dawned with two more crews coming to the school’s kitchen to roll the dough, cut it into circles and most importantly, fill the dough and pinch it into the familiar half moon shape. It is rumored that Alison Todd had a special way of pinching that looked especially professional and Lynn Lak, Susan Levreault, Nancy and Judy Babcock joined her in filling almost 60 dozen pierogi. On Sunday, another 20 dozen were prepared and arranged onto their trays, wrapped and labeled for the lucky customers.

This hubbub of preparation continued amid Veteran’s Day snowflakes when the crew got a head start on the even larger order for cheese and potato pierogi. This pinching crew, joined by Hampshire Regional sophomore Ada Corner, prepared almost 20 dozen pierogi.

The crew continued making the cheese and potato pierogi on Thursday and Friday, joined by a group of faculty and staff: April Rose, Alec MacLachlan, Kristina Canfield, Kimberly Orzechowski, Dana Hafenrichter, Lisa Ouellet, Gretchen Morse-Dobosz, Tamara Donatelli and Betsy Todd. Rose, who is proudly Italian, said she had watched ravioli making all her life and, thus, was prepared for the job. Other community members came to help during the six days of rolling, filling, pinching, boiling and packing, including Elodi McBride and Bruce and Phoebe Todd among others.

On Saturday the crew finally prepared their last pierogi and Emily Lak continued calling the lucky buyers to come get their orders because there wasn’t enough freezer space to hold them all. Kelly Wolf, who was man-

ning two large pots of boiling pierogi, commented, “There’s a special ingredient in these pierogi. Love.”

This sentiment seemed to hold true for all the parents of past R.H. Conwell students who appeared to help, even though their children were grown up and long gone from the school. When each person helping out was asked why they gave up weekends and a holiday totaling over 20 hours for a fundraiser to benefit other people’s children, they all responded that it was for a good cause, the community school.

Anna Langone, current PTO President remarked, “Oh my goodness, we all appreciated it so much. The fact that PTO members from years past are willing to teach us so much and share their hard work, camaraderie and collaboration was an amazing gift.”

The PTO would like to

thank the following families and individuals, whose donations contributed immeasurably to the effort: Alison Todd, Lisa Sage, Evan Spring, Emily Longley, the Crossman Family, the Schultz Family, Kelly Wolf, Lynn Lak, Tom Gorski and Pat Kennedy.

For those who missed out on the chance to order pierogi and, in doing so, support the PTO, the PTO’s fundraisers are posted on their website by visiting <https://worthingtonpto.org/>. If people just want to make a donation to the R.H. Conwell PTO, donations are always welcome. They should make a check out to Worthington School District PTO and mail it to P.O. Box 247, Worthington, MA 01098. Finally, R.H. Conwell parent or former parent wishes to join the PTO, meetings are the third Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the school. All are welcome.

## STCC receives six awards for marketing and communications efforts

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Technical Community College earned six prestigious Medallion Awards from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations District I at the organization’s annual conference held in Pittsburgh in November.

STCC was one of the most awarded colleges on the entire Eastern seaboard and received more honors than any other Massachusetts community college. The Medallion Awards recognize outstanding achievement in design and communications at community and technical colleges across the Northeast, Eastern Canada and the United Kingdom. This year, STCC stood out for creative excellence across a wide range of categories, reflecting the strength and innovation of its Marketing

and Communications team.

STCC received the following awards: Gold Award – E-Newsletter; Gold Award – Interior; Signage/Displays; Silver Award – E-Card; Bronze Award – Excellence in Writing, Short Form; Bronze Award – Outdoor Signage/Display and Bronze Award – Audio Content.

“We are thrilled to be recognized among the best in the region,” said Traci Wolfe, Assistant Vice President of Advancement. “The awards reflect the talent, creativity and hard work of our marketing and communications team who tell STCC’s story with passion and purpose.”

NCMPR District 1 encompasses community and technical colleges from Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, New Hampshire,

New Jersey, New York, Nova Scotia, Pennsylvania, Prince Edward Island, Québec, Rhode Island, Vermont and the United Kingdom.

“To bring home six awards from such a competitive district is an incredible honor,” said Eli Freund, Director of Marketing and Communications. “This recognition reflects our commitment to creating high-quality content that showcases the impact of STCC and our community.”

The achievements highlight STCC’s growing regional reputation for communications excellence and reinforce the college’s mission to engage, educate and inspire through accessible and innovative storytelling.

People may visit [stcc.edu/](http://stcc.edu/) or call Admissions at 413-755-3333 for information on the school.

## WESTFIELD

### Senior's living residence offers Mediterranean diet

WESTFIELD – Award-winning, health-conscious, fine dining is not the norm in assisted living facilities, but at the 20 communities operated by Senior Living Residences, it is the cornerstone of their care for aging adults.

Senior Living Residences encourages their residents to embrace the Mediterranean diet through their Brain Healthy Cooking program, which aims to boost cognitive function through locally sourced and thoughtfully-prepared meals made from scratch, featuring fresh, seasonal ingredients. When this program launched, they were the first Assisted Living company in the nation to create a research-based nutrition program focused on the documented connection between diet and brain health to reduce the effects of cognitive decline among its residents.

Sixteen years later, this program is still a favorite among both residents and their families. Not only is the food nutrient-dense, but their recipes are developed

by talented executive chefs that apply the principles of the Mediterranean Diet to familiar, New England-based fare.

Residents get to try exciting new “brain healthy” dishes as well as updated versions of their favorite classic meals now featuring fresh vegetables and fruits, lean proteins, rich spices and whole grains. “Our communities are using only the freshest ingredients, locally sourced whenever possible and closely examined for quality and freshness,” says Kim Chaisson, SLR’s Director of Culinary and Dining Services.

For residents living in Massachusetts communities, vegetables come from farms in the Northeast distributed by Baldor Foods. SLR communities located in Connecticut, New Hampshire and New Jersey, have partnerships with purveyors closer to them, like Krystal Foods in New Jersey, City Fish Market in Wethersfield, Connecticut. “There are so many benefits to our locally sourced

produce, from the peak ripeness, to the flavorful, nutrient-rich experience,” shares Baldor representative Scott King. “It’s so important for us to support these small businesses and sustainable farming practices while bringing the freshest, highest quality fruits and vegetables directly to these communities.”

All menus are refreshed every three months, which is far shorter than the industry-standard six-month span. Once the chefs understand the Mediterranean Diet and the company’s philosophy around the Brain Healthy Cooking program, they are encouraged to come up with their own recipes, after consulting with the residents who share their favorite ingredients and dishes. “Chefs are very creative. If an ingredient is not working [for residents] in a recipe they are encouraged to try another.”

The chefs interact with the residents each day as part of their assisted living community’s restaurant-style, fine dining experience.

Resident feedback is important to chefs trying to determine what’s a hit and what’s a miss in the dining room. Chef Chris Marsh at Armbrook Village in Westfield, says, “I have had many residents comment on how they enjoy the healthier options available to them daily.” Cathleen McCoy, a resident at Armbrook Village says of Chef Marsh’s meals, “I love the food, it’s very healthy and nutritious. I have lost 10 lbs since moving in due to the healthier diet.”

Harrison Starkweather, a chef at SLR’s Standish Village located in Dorchester, says, “From my perspective, it’s rewarding to see how much residents notice the difference in how they feel. The program’s focus on fresh, nutritious ingredients has influenced how I plan menus prioritizing wholesome, flavorful foods that promote both enjoyment and wellbeing.”

SLR’s dedication to providing excellent food and food services is exceptional. After all, Chaisson queries, “what’s better than fresh?”

### Scouting America hosts holiday night out Dec. 4 celebration

WESTFIELD – The Western Massachusetts Council of Scouting America will hold a fun and festive Holiday Night Out for Scouting to celebrate the season and spirit of Scouting on Thursday, Dec. 4 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Jupiter Club in Easthampton, 116 Pleasant St., Suite 121.

The event is open to Scouters and non-scouters alike and will include food, fun and fellowship to support the Western Mass Council. Cost of the event is \$50 per person and includes one complimentary drink ticket, delicious hours d’oeuvres provided by Graze Craze, as well as access to a large silent auction featuring local favorites and exclusive experiences and a raffle program.

“We’re very excited about this event and the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on youth programs that build leadership,

character, and community,” said Richard Belford, council commissioner. “It will be a wonderful night with holiday cheer and great company, so please join us if you can!”

As one of the nation’s largest and the most effective youth development organizations, Scouting America, formerly known as BSA, has served young men and women for more than 100 years. The mission of the Scouting America and the Western Massachusetts Council is to inspire young people to make ethical and moral choices, become self-reliant and take a prominent role in civic engagement over their lifetimes.

For more information or to register for the Holiday Night Out for Scouting, people may call the council office at 413-5949196 or visit Give - Scouting America.

## NORTHAMPTON

### Forbes Library lists December events

NORTHAMPTON – The Forbes Library, 20 West St., will be closed on Friday, Dec. 5 for all-day staff training.

The library will open for regular service on Saturday, Dec. 6. Rhythm and Rails will take place Saturday, Dec. 6 at 2:30 p.m. Northampton and the Iron House, a social history in tales and tunes. The Red Skies Music Ensemble will perform.

Google Chrome basics will be offered on Wednesday, Dec. 10 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Registration is required by visiting forbeslibrary.libcal.com. A holiday sing-along for food

will take place Saturday, Dec. 13 from 12:30-2p.m. hosted by the Ukulele Strum Group in the Coolidge Museum. The event is free and open to all and is family friendly age 5 plus and up.

A Looky Here Calendar Show will be featured now through Monday, Dec. 29 in the Hosmer Gallery at the library. The library will hold a youth winter clothing driving now through Dec. 30 to bene Head Start. Clothing donations should be sizes 12 months to 1u years. NO adult or summer clothing will be accepted. Collection boxes are located in the Children’s Department and the first floor lobby.

### Freedom Credit Union launches holiday giving initiatives

SPRINGFIELD – Freedom Credit Union, long recognized for its commitment to strengthening the communities it serves, is once again rallying members, employees and the public to help support neighbors in need this holiday season.

Through two collaborative initiatives with Clinical & Support Options, FCU is on a mission to ensure local individuals and families have warm clothing, essential items and meaningful gifts during the winter months.

“This time of year can be especially difficult for those facing homelessness or financial hardship,” said Glenn Welch, president and CEO of Freedom Credit Union. “Giving back is at the very

heart of our mission and we’re grateful to partner with CSO to make sure our community members feel supported, valued and included.”

This December, FCU is collecting new winter coats and clothing to benefit the hundreds of people seeking emergency shelter each night across Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties. CSO shelters welcome approximately 300 guests nightly, many of whom are in urgent need of warm layers and basic essentials. Items requested include: winter coats (adult sizes L-3X); hats, mittens and gloves;

adult socks; men’s boxer briefs (adult sizes L-3X); women’s underwear (adult sizes L-3X) and long Johns

and thermal underlayers.

Donations may be dropped off at any FCU branch through Dec. 18.

In addition, Freedom Credit Union is inviting the community to take part in CSO’s “Sponsor a Family” gift program, which supports more than 600 local children. Holiday wish tags for each child will be available at FCU branches. Anyone who chooses to sponsor a child can return new, unwrapped gifts to any branch by Thursday, Dec. 11. CSO will pick up the donations the next day to wrap and deliver them to families in time for the holidays.

“These programs allow anyone who wants to help to do so in a meaningful, personal way,” added Welch.

“Together, we can make the season warmer and brighter for our neighbors.”

Donations for both programs may be made at all Freedom Credit Union branch locations.

Originally chartered in 1922 as the Western Massachusetts Telephone Workers Credit Union and renamed in 2004, Freedom Credit Union is a 9-branch, full-service financial institution. Freedom Credit Union has conveniently located Massachusetts branches in Chicopee, Feeding Hills, Greenfield, Ludlow, Northampton, Turners Falls, West Springfield and two in Springfield, as well as a Loan Production Office in Enfield, Connecticut.

## GOSHEN

### COA list upcoming events

GOSHEN – The Council on Aging will hold a holiday luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 9 at noon at John James Memorial Hall, 42 Main St.

The holidays are here. Jerry from Spruce Corner Restaurant will be cooking up a fabulous holiday meal with a choice of prime rib or vegetable lasagna. They will have potatoes, vegetables and a salad on the side. And, of course there will be something delicious for dessert.

The Town Hall will be transformed into a winter wonderland and Santa is sure to visit.

On Friday, Dec. 5 Community Connections from 10-11 a.m. There will be some festive holiday snacks and games to kick off December. They are sure to have a lot of fun. They will meet in the upstairs dining room of the Goshen Town Hall.

On Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 9:15 a.m. Goshen and Chesterfield older adults have been invited to New Hingham Regional Elementary School for their December all school meeting, which is an assembly hosted by a class where students share recent projects and community members are welcome. For December, the focus is on a community building activity called December Expectations Reset. They will have a special COA section of chairs, so let Kerry know if they plan to attend by calling 413-268-9354. The COA hopes to make this a

monthly event.

On Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. holiday caroling returns this year. The COA carolers invite those who would like to join them in singing carols to older adults in town. Participants will carpool from the Goshen parking lot and travel together to sing in various locations. They may call Kerry at 413-268-9354 if they would like to sing with them. All voices welcome; the more the merrier. People may contact Kerry if they are unable to get out and would like the carolers to come to their door to spread some holiday cheer.

On Tuesdays, Dec. 16 and 23 Highland Valley Elder Service delivers grab and go lunches to Goshen COA on the third and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Participants pick up their hot lunch at the Goshen Town Hall from 12:30-1 p.m. The lunch for Dec. 16 is a choice of Swedish meatballs or baked ziti and the choice for Dec. 23 is chicken soup or salmon Florentine. The meals also include milk, vegetables, and dessert. There is a suggested \$4 donation given to Highland Valley Elder Service to offset the cost of the meal. People may call Kerry at 413-268-9354 if they would like to sign up to get these nutritious and delicious meals. The COA would like increase participation in this program.

On Wednesday, Dec. 17 games group will meet in the library from 2-4pm. They

have a variety of games to choose from and they will also have cards. The COA plans to have a puzzle making contest in the near future. People should let them know if they’d be interested in joining. Prizes will be awarded.

On Thursday, Dec. 18 technology help in the library will be available from noon-2 p.m. People can ask questions regarding their computer, phone, tablet or any other technology related question and they will do their best to help.

The Hampshire County Sheriff’s Office TRIAD services will be working with the COA and local law enforcement to deliver a bucket of sand to seniors, who need it to spread on icy walkways to prevent falls. If they would like to be added to the list, seniors should call Henrietta Munroe at 413-268-7465 and she will coordinate the plan with TRIAD.

Exercise classes continue with Joan Griswold on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. in the Goshen Town Hall. The focus is on functional movement, which enhances physical strength and balance. Participants should wear supportive footwear and bring water and free weights if they have them. There is a brief health questionnaire, Joan will have them fill out. This class is also offered simultaneously on Zoom, so if they prefer this method, they may email Joan joan@bybhealth.com.

## STOCKBRIDGE

### Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas set for this weekend

STOCKBRIDGE – Rediscover the joys of the holidays in Stockbridge, where the town transforms into a magical New England village, adorned with twinkling lights and charming holiday wreaths that evoke the spirit of the season.

This enchanting destination offers a delightful array of family-friendly activities that promise to create cherished memories for all. From captivating live performances and historic property tours to bustling holiday markets and the mesmerizing Winterlights display, there’s truly something for everyone to enjoy.

The Rockwell Holidays at the Museum, where art and tradition come alive or the unique shops and restaurants that showcase the best of local commerce. And of course, Santa himself will be making appearances, adding an extra sprinkle of joy to this festive season. On the first weekend in December each year the town pays homage to Norman Rockwell’s idyllic depiction of village life during the holidays,

Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas.

One of the highlights is the much-anticipated historic property tours on Saturday. This year’s self-guided journey invites you to explore The Merwin House, where special treats await, and to bask in the joyous holiday music at Ventfort Hall Mansion and Gilded Age Museum. The National Shrine of Divine Mercy Residence and the creativity and inspiration of Chesterwood will be brimming with festive cheer.

The musical high point of the weekend takes place on Saturday evening at the First Congregational Church Saturday, Dec. 6 from 5-6:15 p.m. featuring a brand-new show by the Albany Pro Musica Chamber Singers, followed by a spirited group sing-along that promises to unite us all in joyous celebration.

As the weekend culminates on Sunday, Stockbridge comes alive with a heartwarming reenactment that beautifully embodies the spirit of Norman Rockwell’s iconic holiday scene, “Home for Christmas.” Just a stone’s

throw from the Norman Rockwell Museum, where the original painting resides, this festive celebration transforms Main Street into a vibrant tapestry of holiday cheer. Visitors will be delighted by the sight of over 25 vintage automobiles lined up along the street, which is joyfully closed to traffic. The festivities include captivating performances by the Victorian Carolers, and talented students from Monument Mountain Regional High School, alongside delightful horse-drawn rides, engaging children’s crafts, and magical visits with Santa himself. Tickets may only be purchased in advance online through the Stockbridge Chamber of Website: [www.stockbridgechamber.org](http://www.stockbridgechamber.org)

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

# PUBLIC NOTICES

## TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATION PROJECT REQUEST FOR BIDS

The Town of Middlefield is seeking Bids for the purchase and installation of a new playground system for ages 5 through 12 years of age by a Contractor in the center of Middlefield at 172 Skyline Trail adjacent to the Middlefield Senior Center. The Town is also requesting the Contractor to furnish and install required playground border timbers and stakes shown for existing swing sets and Monkey Bar Area. Measurements of the areas to receive the timbers are in the Bid Documents. The Contractor will also be responsible for providing and installing a new geodesic cloth barrier to cover all areas to receive safety barrier fill by others. All new and existing areas will be prepared by others for the installation of the border timbers by the successful Bidder. Safety filling of each area will also be provided and installed by others. The plan calls for the use of approved rounded wood chip bark mulch per the state required depth. The successful playground contractor shall provide at least a one-year warranty on all parts and labor. Extended warranties are welcomed.

**Bid documents will be**

available starting on Monday December 1, 2025, and will be available until 2:00 P.M. on December 22, 2025. Bids documents can be requested by contacting the Town of Middlefield Administrative Assistant Mark Doane at [middlefieldassistant@gmail.com](mailto:middlefieldassistant@gmail.com) or by calling the Middlefield Town Hall at 413-623-2079 ext. 2. Bids can also be picked up from the Middlefield Administrative Assistant Office located in the Select Board Office 188 Skyline Trail Middlefield, MA 01243 on Mondays from 1:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Wednesdays from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. The Select Board Office is located in the Town Hall, 188 Skyline Trail Middlefield, MA 01243. There is no cost for Bid Documents. It is suggested that Bidders view the site of the new playground system which will be constructed on the site of the existing playground adjacent to the Middlefield Senior Center located at 172 Skyline Trail in Middlefield, MA. All Bids must be received by the Middlefield Administrative Assistant no later than Monday December 22, 2025, at 2:00P.M. All bids must be delivered to the Town Administrative Assistant's Office located in the Middlefield Town Hall 188 Skyline Trail Middlefield, MA

01243 in sealed envelopes with Playground System Bid printed on the envelope by 2:00 P.M. on December 22, 2025. No Bids will be accepted after that time and date. Bids will be opened immediately after the close of Bidding at 2:05 P.M. in the Middlefield Town Hall. The project will be awarded immediately after Bids are opened and the project shall begin when weather conditions and site preparations are completed. All work in this Bid shall be completed no later than April 24, 2026.

**Note: Massachusetts Prevailing Rates are required to be paid on this project. Questions can be directed to Ann Marie Visconti Chair, Middlefield Select Board by calling 413-623-2079, 413-433-2729, or by email: [middlefield.amv@gmail.com](mailto:middlefield.amv@gmail.com).**  
12/04, 12/11/2025

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL Central Massachusetts Division**  
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ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL

**ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
October 14, 2025  
Suzanne C. Lemieux,  
Town Clerk  
P.O. Box 265  
Middlefield, MA 01243  
**Re: Middlefield Annual Town Meeting of May 3, 2025 - Case # 11996**  
**Warrant Articles # 32 and 33 (General)**

Dear Ms. Lemieux:  
**Article 32** - We approve Article 32 from the May 3, 2025 Middlefield Annual Town Meeting.

**Article 33** - We take no action on Article 33 because it is not a by-law amendment and is therefore not subject to the Attorney General's review and approval under G.L. c. 40 32. Under Article 33 the Town voted "to establish a 'strong' fire chief statute [under]...MGL Chapter 48, Section[s] 42, 43, and 44." General Laws Chapter 48, Section 42 provides in relevant part:

Towns accepting the provisions of this section and sections forty-three and forty-four, or which have accepted corresponding provisions of earlier laws may establish a fire department to be under the control of an officer to be known as the chief of the fire department. The chief shall be appointed by the selectmen, and shall receive such salary as the selectmen may

from time to time determine, not exceeding in the aggregate the amount annually appropriated therefor. He may be removed for cause by the selectmen at any time after a hearing. He shall have charge of extinguishing fires in the town and the protection of life and property in case of fire. He shall purchase subject to the approval of the selectmen and keep in repair all property and apparatus used for and by the fire department. He shall have and exercise all the powers and discharge all the duties conferred or imposed by statute upon engineers in towns except as herein provided, and shall appoint a deputy chief and such officers and firemen as he may think necessary, and may remove the same at any time for cause and after a hearing. He shall have full and absolute authority in the administration of the department, shall make all rules and regulations for its operation, shall report to the selectmen from time to time as they may require, and shall annually report to the town the condition of the department with his recommendations thereon; he shall fix the compensation of the permanent and call members of the fire department subject to the approval of the selectmen. In the expenditure of money the chief shall be subject to such further limitations as the town may

from time to time prescribe. The appointment of the chief of the fire department in any town or district having a population of five thousand or less may be for a period of three years.

Because Article 33 is a vote to accept a local option statute, and not a by-law, it is not subject to the Attorney General's review and approval. For that reason, we take no action on Article 33. However, votes to accept statutes are supposed to be filed with the Secretary of State's Office and if the vote involves a financial matter, with the Department of Revenue/Division of local Services as well. The Town should consult with Town Counsel with any questions on this issue.

**Note: Pursuant to G.L. c. 40, § 32, neither general nor zoning by-laws take effect unless the town has first satisfied the posting/publishing requirements of that statute.**

Very truly yours,  
ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
By: Nicole B. Caprioli  
Assistant Attorney General  
Deputy Director, Municipal Law Unit  
10 Mechanic Street, Suite 301  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(774) 214-4418  
cc: Town Counsel  
Lauren F. Goldberg  
12/04, 12/11/2025

## GARDEN

from page 4

Be careful to lay them alongside, not on top of each other. It's important, however, to have the wire catch a little bit of the stem of the prior bunch – that way the wreath will be good and tight.

You can make a wreath of just extra boughs from your Christmas tree, but mixing in other types of greens will make it more interesting. I like to use prunings from my home landscape: mountain laurel, boxwood, juniper, and white pine among others will look great together because they vary in color and texture.

You can dress up a green wreath with pinecones, winterberries and artificial fruit, not to mention a big bow. Most types of Christmas tree boughs are conducive to wreath making, but wear thick gloves if you are using Colorado blue spruce as your base – it sure is picky!

When my Dad gave up making his famous wreaths, Mom took a simpler yet more elaborate approach to decorating our house. She would make a swag for each window!

First determine how many you want to make, then set up an assembly-line of sorts. Choose a sturdy green for the base of the swag- extra Christmas tree boughs would be perfect for this as well.

I cut however many I need to the same size, and I lay them out pretty side up. Next, I choose another type of green a bit smaller and put it on top. I repeat the process six or seven times until I have a nice upside-down "fan."

Here too, varying texture is nice, although Mom's feathery white pine and pine cone swags are pretty by themselves.

To complete your swag, wrap wire around the stems

four or five inches down from the top, leaving a loop on the back for a hanger. You can cover the wire with a bow. I have often wired two swags together horizontally.

Place a bow in the middle, where the two intersect and hang your creation over a window or door, or even underneath a window for a different take on decorating.

Whether this is your first attempt at wreath and swag making or you've been at it for years, enjoy this holiday ritual, just as my mom and dad did.

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

## REGION

### DCR lists universal access programs

**BOSTON** — The Department of Conservation and Recreation announces its Universal Access Program's winter programming schedule to ensure that every Massachusetts resident can experience and enjoy the outdoors year-round.

The programming adapts some of New England's most popular outdoor wintertime activities to the varying abilities and needs of all park visitors. This year's winter lineup includes adaptive skiing, skating, snowshoeing, hiking, and sledding, running now through March. DCR partners with non-profit organizations and volunteers across the state to provide specialized equipment and support personnel at program locations throughout

the state each winter.

"Our outdoor spaces belong to everyone, and we want every resident to experience the joy of winter," said DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle. "Through the Universal Access Program and our work with community partners, we're creating more ways for people of all abilities to see themselves in our parks whether that's on a ski mountain, a winter trail or an ice rink and to experience the beauty of the outdoors all year long."

"Wintertime is a great time to take advantage of DCR's Universal Access Program recreation offerings. Whether it's sit-skating, adaptive cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or any of our other opportunities to get out of the house and

enjoy this beautiful time of year," said UAP Program Director Tom McCarthy. "Please join us for a fun-filled experience. We look forward to seeing you soon."

This winter, DCR will provide adaptive programming at 15 parks, skating rinks, and ski areas. Each activity is tailored to accommodate a wide variety of participant needs and the majority are offered at no cost. All UAP programs include adaptive equipment for a variety of needs, professional staff, instruction, and support. Programs are for individuals of all ages with any disabilities. Friends and family members of participants are also encouraged to take part.

In addition to program-

DCR, page 10



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# Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

## The Town of Williamsburg, MA, is accepting applications for the position of Town Administrator.

Williamsburg has a population of approximately 2,500 and an annual operating budget of \$10 million.

As the chief administrative officer of the Town, the Town Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Select Board. While working with considerable independence, the Town Administrator performs administrative and supervisory duties; coordinates and supports the activities of departments, commissions, boards, committees, and offices of the Town of Williamsburg; carries out the policies and activities of the Select Board; and serves as a liaison and coordinator among other Town departments and organizations.

A bachelor's degree in public administration, business, or a related field is preferred; three to five years of experience in municipal administration as a Town Administrator or in a related field is preferred; experience in public procurement is preferred; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

The position is Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) exempt and fully benefited at 40 hours per week (M-F, 8 AM-4 PM). Friday may be remote or in-office. The position includes a minimum of two evenings per month for Select Board meetings; other night meetings may be required as needed. The salary is commensurate with experience, within the range of \$75,000-\$90,000. A complete job description is available on the Town's website at: <https://www.burgy.org/board-selectmen/pages/employment-applications-opportunities>.

Resumes will be accepted until 01/05/2026. To apply, please submit a resume and a letter of interest to [selectmen@burgy.org](mailto:selectmen@burgy.org).



**Turley Publications, Inc.**



**Logan Distler**  
September 22, 2024  
Parents: Daniel & Lisa Distler, Brimfield  
Grandparents: Christopher & Michele Mues, Warren  
Carole & the late Bruce Distler, Long Island, NY

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Include a self addressed/ stamped envelope if you would like the picture returned or email photo to: [jamie@turley.com](mailto:jamie@turley.com) with subject line: **BABY'S FIRST.**  
This offer is available to all babies born in 2025. Pictures will be published the week of December 23-26, 2025.

Baby's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Parents' Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grandparents' Names & Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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*Please check the newspaper you would like your announcement to appear.*

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<input type="checkbox"/> The Holyoke Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> Ware River News
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal Register	<input type="checkbox"/> The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

**Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 12, 2025**

# WORTHINGTON

## Worthington holds tree lighting Dec. 7

WORTHINGTON – A holiday tree lighting will take place on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 4 p.m. at the town pond. Rain or snow date will be Sunday, Dec. 7. There will be light refreshments and coffee, hot chocolate, cookies, soups and more. People can warm

themselves around the fire. People should dress warmly and bring a chair if they want a place to sit. The tree lighting is hosted by the Worthington Parks and Recreation Department and catering is provided by Within Worthington.

## Food drive benefits Hilltown Food Pantry

WORTHINGTON – The local food drive to benefit the Hilltown Food Pantry on Saturday, Nov. 15 was a tremendous success. A total of 1,362 lbs of food, comprised of 1,214 individual items, plus \$1,535 of donated in cash and checks was delivered to

the food pantry in Goshen that afternoon. It took two full truckloads to bring the donations to the pantry. Indivisible Hilltowns, the volunteer organization that organized the drive, expressed appreciation for the generosity of local residents.

### DCR

ming, DCR has adaptive equipment at various properties that allow individuals with disabilities to enjoy parks independently, including at skating rinks statewide and at Leo J. Martin Ski Track in Weston.

This year's winter programs and other adaptive recreation options include: **Skating:** Ranking among UAP's most popular winter offerings, accessible skating is being offered at rinks throughout the state and to individuals of all skill levels. Working with Holyoke Rows, Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers, and All Out Adventures, DCR offers ice sleds, skate walkers, conventional skates, and ice grippers for participants. Participants are also welcome to go out on the ice using their own mobility devices.

**Skiing:** Together with staff from All Out Adventures, Waypoint Adventure, and Wachusett Mountain UAP provides adaptive, cross-country and seated skiing. Adaptive

cross-country skiing will be offered at the Leo J. Martin ski track in Weston, where snow is made daily, Wendell State Forest, and Daughters of the American Revolution State Park in Goshen. Adaptive equipment will be available at all locations and for all skiing activities.

**Hiking:** Join our partners from Waypoint Adventure on a relaxing jaunt around historic Walden Pond in Concord, Blue Hills Reservation in Milton or Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle. A variety of adaptive equipment is available, as well as trained instruction for anyone using equipment for the first time.

**Snowshoeing:** Once the snow starts piling up, snowshoeing will be available through All Out Adventures at Wendell State Forest and Daughters of the American Revolution State Park. Kicksleds will also be available to anyone looking to explore the trails at either park.

**Hockey:** Spaulding

Adaptive Sports Centers' Sears Adaptive Hockey program offers both competitive and recreational sled hockey at Allied Veterans Memorial Rink in Everett. Programming will feature individual coaching, skills training, and organized games and scrimmages.

**Downhill skiing:** Adaptive downhill skiing lessons are offered by Wachusett Mountain Ski Area. Wachusett Mountain staff are trained in working with skiers of all ages and abilities to enjoy winter snow sports.

In the past year, DCR, through UAP, has provided recreation opportunities for nearly 1,500 participants with disabilities and more than 1,200 family members, friends and support staff.

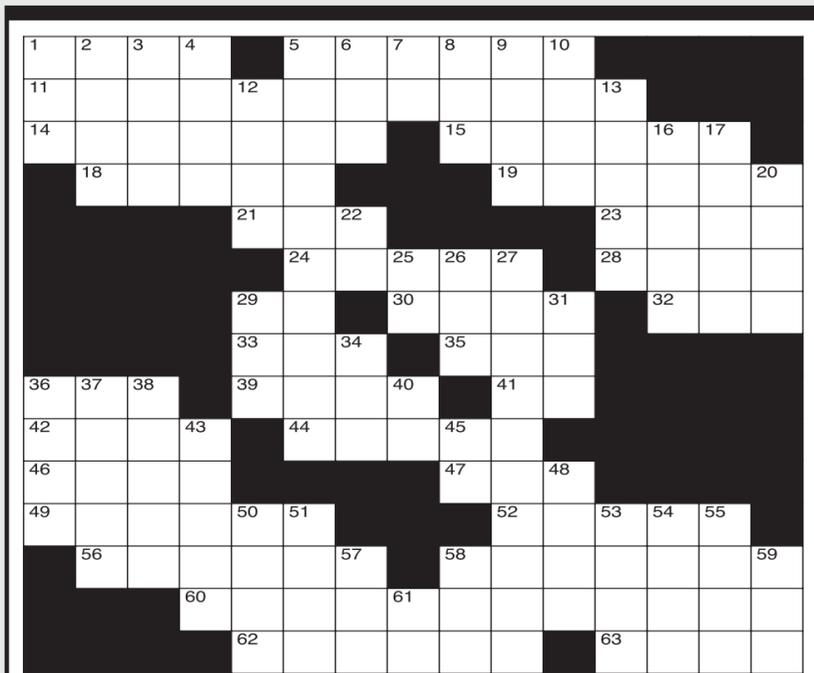
To take part in UAP programming, participants need to register in advance. To register and view the full Winter 2025-2026 Adaptive Program Schedule including program locations, dates and times visit the UAP website. Those inter-

ested in joining the mailing list to receive notifications of upcoming events and activities can call 413-461-7126 or email DCR.UniversalAccess@mass.gov.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation oversees nearly half a million acres of land, making up one of the largest and most diverse state park systems in the country. To learn more about DCR, the facilities and their programs, people may visit [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr) or email them at [mass.parks@mass.gov](mailto:mass.parks@mass.gov).

### 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.



#### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Dough made from corn flour
- 5. Rise
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. A low wall
- 15. Kidnap
- 18. A cup golfers want to win
- 19. Outgoing
- 21. "Partner" to flow
- 23. Former Michigan coach Brady
- 24. Proverb
- 28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 29. Helps a body recover
- 30. Baseball Cy Young winner
- 32. Very fast airplane
- 33. Offensive baseball stat
- 35. Body of water

- 36. Record of one's heartbeat
- 39. Signs a contract
- 41. Atomic #24
- 42. Bind securely
- 44. French Jesuit theologian
- 46. Fragrant brown balsam
- 47. Post office box
- 49. Sells tickets at inflated prices
- 52. Places to hang coats
- 56. Jewish salutation
- 58. Yellow fruits
- 60. Poorly educated
- 62. Microorganism
- 63. Talk show host Barrymore

#### CLUES DOWN

- 1. A way to plan
- 2. Three-banded

- 3. Mobile
- 4. Romanian city
- 5. Making sour
- 6. Take a seat
- 7. "The Golden State"
- 8. When you hope to arrive
- 9. Pointed ends of pens
- 10. Extinct flightless bird
- 12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
- 13. Nape of neck
- 16. Problems (Spanish slang)
- 17. Narrow carpet
- 20. To avoid the risk of
- 22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)
- 25. Equally
- 26. Traditional cars still need it
- 27. Eligible voters
- 29. Greek alphabet letter
- 31. Body part
- 34. Referee-declared outcome
- 36. Means to moving money
- 37. Popular footwear brand
- 38. Cockatoo
- 40. NFL's big game
- 43. Botswana currencies
- 45. News-reporting organization
- 48. Batman villain
- 50. Urgent request
- 51. Not all
- 53. Hallmark's specialty
- 54. Knot in a tree
- 55. Satisfy
- 57. Notable space station
- 58. Baby's dining accessory
- 59. Stitch clothing
- 61. \_\_\_ and behold

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

### ARIES

**Mar 21/Apr 20**  
Your energy is contagious this week, Aries. Expect bursts of creativity and spontaneous fun to ensue. Perhaps an unexpected adventure will pop up? Take the lead in social situations.

### TAURUS

**Apr 21/May 21**  
It might be a week for indulgence in the best ways possible, Taurus. Treat yourself to something delicious or cozy, and don't feel guilty about it. Patience will pay off in work projects.

### GEMINI

**May 22/June 21**  
Curiosity is your superpower this week, Gemini. Choose a new hobby or explore a class at the community college. You might discover hidden talents or interests.

### CANCER

**June 22/July 22**  
Cancer, this is your week to shine emotionally. Reach out to friends or family who you haven't spoken with in a while. Small acts of kindness can come back to you in surprising ways.

### LEO

**July 23/Aug 23**  
It's time to hear that roar, Leo. Your charisma is unstoppable right now and you're ready to step into the spotlight. Share your ideas and achievements with anyone who will listen.

### VIRGO

**Aug 24/Sept 22**  
Your knack for organization is a ticket to smooth sailing this week, Virgo. A little planning goes a long way right now. However, don't forget to add some fun, too.

### LIBRA

**Sept 23/Oct 23**  
This week you may find yourself effortlessly charming all of those people around you, Libra. Social events or collaborations may be particularly festive.

### SCORPIO

**Oct 23/Nov 22**  
Scorpio, this week brings opportunities to dive in deep with something you are passionate about. Your intensity attracts attention, so embrace your magnetic personality.

### SAGITTARIUS

**Nov 23/Dec 21**  
Adventure is calling, Sagittarius. Whether it's a small trip over the weekend or a new hobby, your week is packed with excitement and energy. Your optimism is contagious.

### CAPRICORN

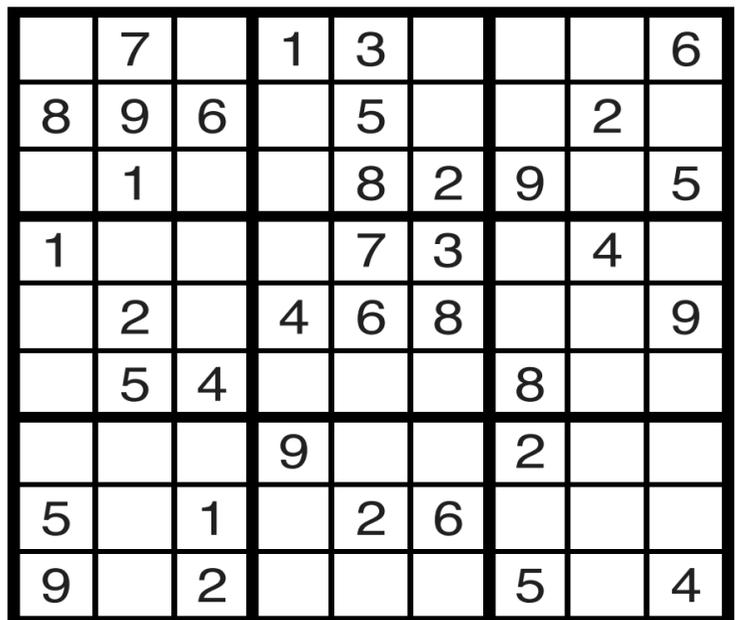
**Dec 22/Jan 20**  
Determination and hard work this week will have personal or work projects moving along faster than expected. Remember to reward yourself along the way.

### AQUARIUS

**Jan 21/Feb 18**  
Aquarius, innovation is on your mind right now. Ideas and originality shine through in all you do. Expect some playful debates or spontaneous collaborations.

### PISCES

**Feb 19/Mar 20**  
It is alright to let your imagination run wild this week, Pisces. Creativity flows easily, and your intuition can guide you to some unexpected things along the way.



## 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

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**answers**

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