

“Always be on the lookout for the presence of wonder.” – E.B. White

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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

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## HUNTINGTON

### Select Board approves new flag policy

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

Tackling everything from a new flag policy to work proposed for Stanton Hall and the highway garage, along with new streetlights, the Huntington Select Board met on Wednesday, Nov. 29.

A new flag policy was adopted to define flags that will be allowed to fly on Town of Huntington flagpoles. Authorized were the official flags of the United States of America, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Town of Huntington, along with the official flags of various branches of military services of the United States of America and/or the official MIA/POW flag. According to the new policy, these flags may be flown as an “official expression of the Town’s governmental speech, to which the strictures of the First Amendment do not apply.”

No other flags may be flown on town-owned flagpoles as “those flagpoles and this policy are not intended to establish or serve to create a forum for private expression.” The policy was unanimously approved by Chairman Edward Renaud

POLICY, page 2

## Sugar and Spice



Alivia Nye works on her gingerbread house and Eowyn Thomas show the gingerbread cookie she decorated at the Porter Memorial Library in Blandford last Saturday. Submitted photos



Hawthorne, Oona and Edwin Sloane-Roberts working on their sweet structures.

## BLANDFORD

### Board appoints Interim TA to Search Committee

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Interim Town Administrator Ira Brezinsky, via Zoom Monday night, told the board that free cash has been certified by the Department of Revenue at \$518,844 and retained earnings for the Water Department at \$56,375 and Broadband (Municipal Light Plant) at \$251,877.

He brought the board up to date on the administrator search process and said that there were new applications to be reviewed and that the committee would have candidates for the board in about two weeks. The board appointed him to the committee as a “non-voting member.”

#### Electrical Inspector

Electrical Inspector John VanHeynigen met with the Select Board and told them there will be a 42-week wait for the Automatic Transfer Switch to come from the manufacturer, Russelectric. He would like to get the purchase process underway as soon as possible because of the long wait. The switch is for the generator at the Town Hall which would, once the switch is

BOARD, page 6

## BLANDFORD FIREMEN BREAKFAST HAD A SPECIAL GUEST, SANTA



Arame and Fiorinna Droma make treat selections at the fireman's breakfast.



Leah and Jeff Bacon and their family attended the fireman's breakfast last week in Blandford.



Santa was a special guest at the Blandford Firemen's breakfast. Submitted photos

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# HUNTINGTON

## Huntington energy program announces new rates

HUNTINGTON – The town of Huntington signed a twenty-four month contract with its current supplier, Dynegy Energy Services.

The Huntington Community Choice Power Supply Program will have a new standard product that meets Massachusetts Renewable Energy Requirement (MA Req) of 62.3% at a rate of \$0.14159 per kWh. It will also continue to offer an optional product that meets MA Req plus uses an additional 25% Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Certificates at a rate of \$0.15136 per kWh.

For Huntington residents and businesses, who are enrolled in the Town's standard product, the current rate of \$0.09534 per kWh will expire and the new rate of \$0.14159 per kWh will take effect with the January 2024 meter reads. This represents an increase of \$28 per month on the supply side of the bill given average usage of 600 kWh. However, this new rate is 11% lower than Eversource's recently announced Residential Basic Service rate of \$0.15845 per kWh. Residents can expect to see an average savings of \$10 per month for the months of January 2024 through July 2024\*.

"Although the Program rate is increasing due to market conditions, we're pleased to be able to offer long term stable rates that will also provide savings to our residents this winter," said Ed Renauld, Huntington Select board

Chair. "The goal of the Program is to lock in a competitive price that provides savings now and that will provide stability for the next two years."

Huntington launched its electricity program in August 2020 in an effort to develop an energy program that would be stable, affordable and incorporate renewable energy. From inception through June 2023, the program has saved residents and small businesses over \$705,000 in electricity costs as compared to Basic Service.

It is important to note that no action will be required by individual consumers. This change will be seen on the February 2024 bills. All accounts currently enrolled in the Program will remain with their current product selection and see the new rate under the "Supplier Services" section of their monthly bill.

The Huntington Community Choice Power Supply Program has no fees or charges. However, anyone switching from a contract with a third-party supplier may be subject to penalties or early termination fees charged by that supplier. Ratepayers should verify terms before switching.

Basic Service rates change twice a year or more, depending on rate class. As a result, the aggregation rate may not always be lower than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregation is to deliver savings over the life of the program against Eversource Basic Service.

However, such savings and future savings cannot be guaranteed.

Eversource customers who meet certain means criteria can qualify to receive a discount on their electric bills. To learn more, residents may visit [eversource.com/content/residential/account-billing/payment-assistance/discount-rate](https://eversource.com/content/residential/account-billing/payment-assistance/discount-rate).

Residents may also visit [colonialpowergroup.com/huntingtonor](https://colonialpowergroup.com/huntingtonor), call 866-485-5858 extension 1 to learn more about Huntington's Community Choice Power Supply Program, to opt-in or opt-out or to change their current product selection.

\*Normally, the term would be through June 2024 but this is a transition term. The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities issued an Order on September 1, 2023 that requires Eversource change its residential and small business Basic Service periods to February through July and August through January. This is expected to mitigate large seasonal changes in Basic Service electricity supply prices and differences across electric distribution companies. [See [mass.gov/news/dpu-orders-schedule-changes-to-basic-service-rates](https://mass.gov/news/dpu-orders-schedule-changes-to-basic-service-rates).]

Based in Marlborough, Mass., Colonial Power Group is the leading aggregation consulting firm in Massachusetts. Colonial Power has been working with local governments since 2002 in the design, implementation and management of municipal aggregation programs.

## COA announces educational programs

HUNTINGTON – The Council on Aging for the town has announced an educational series of events for December, January and February.

On Wednesday, Dec. 20, Meredith Starr from the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts will give a presentation on "Protein, Food Safety and Resistance Bands" from 1-2 p.m. Starr will return on Wednesday, Jan. 10 to present on "Exotic Fruits, Veggies & Grains, Balance and Flexibility."

All COA activities through mid-January will be held at the Huntington Evangelical Church Chapel, 22 Russell Road, located next to Town Hall, while the new ramp into Stanton Hall is under construction.

Also in January, Library Director Amanda Loisel will discuss the advantages to belonging to, and visiting, the Huntington Public Library. This will also be held from 1-2 p.m. on Jan 17, when programs will be likely to return to Stanton Hall.

In late January, the series will offer a training on Narcan on Wednesday, Jan. 24. "Losing Murrayfield" will be the topic on Wednesday, Feb. 7 and will be presented by local historian John Garvey.

*from page 1*

## POLICY

and members Roger Booth and William Hathaway.

### Audit

Town Administrator Jennifer Peloquin announced that the town has not conducted an audit since 2017. Scanlon and Associates, the town's usual auditors, have not responded to requests for services, which have been made several times since May 2022. Peloquin spoke with officials from the town of Middlefield, who have selected another auditor that they are happy with. The Board authorized Peloquin to look into other options.

### Street lights

Police Chief Robert Garriepy has proposed additional street lights at the junctures of County Road and Route 112, and Route 66 and Route 112. Eversource would pay to put them in while the town would pay for the electrical cost. This was approved, with Booth stating he wanted to speak with Garriepy about other County Road issues: incidences of cars trying to turn north onto Route 112 and going over the embankment, and tractor trailer trucks getting stuck at the hairpin turn on the road, necessitating signage-Booth said-to prevent.

### Stanton Hall

It has been brought to Peloquin's attention the doors on the Route 20 end of Stanton Hall, now in use while the new accessible ramp is under construction, will require a major rehab or replacement. In addition, the drop ceiling inside of Stanton Hall has gotten heavier as plaster ceiling pieces have been falling onto the top; it appears to be at risk of falling in. Stanton Hall is a historic building, which may complicate repairs.

In addition, the steeple and building needs to be repaired and painted. Renauld suggested putting the repairs off until the ramp is done and the final financial impact of that is known. Booth suggested tabling all Stanton Hall repairs until an assessment is done and completing them all at once.

### Card reader access system

Peloquin also reported that numer-

ous people, including non-employees, seem to have the code to the Highway Department garage. A card-reader access system is already planned for town hall and Stanton Hall and Peloquin proposed adding the same system for the highway garage. Peloquin said the cost was about \$6,000 per entrance several years ago. The Select Board asked her to get a new quote for all three buildings for consideration.

### Change orders for ramp

Two change orders were considered for the town hall ramp project. The first addresses a need to tie the ramp into the existing stairs, which will cost \$2,960 and will be paid out of the Stanton Fund. This was unanimously approved. A second suggested change order would connect the ramp/stairs to the sidewalk on the town green. This was denied by the Select Board. Finally, a form has to go to the state to extend grant funding for this project, which currently expires Sunday, Dec. 31. The form will stipulate a new end date of Sunday, March 31, 2024, even though the project is expected to end by Thursday, Jan. 18, to allow for unforeseen contingencies.

### Retirement

The upcoming retirement of Town Clerk Linda Hamlin was also discussed; she is aiming to leave by Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024 but is available to stay until March. Renauld said they will need a firm date from Hamlin in order to post the job; Hamlin's tenure would include an estimated two weeks of training for the new town clerk. Further complicating the transition is that the town is mid-way through a process of changing the position from an elected to appointed one. This will be finalized by either the legislature approving a home rule petition or by a final vote of town residents (who have already affirmed their first vote on the matter). Peloquin thought the Town Clerk will need to be bonded, but Renauld thought we did not meet the financial threshold for that requirement. This will be followed up.

### ARPA funds

Peloquin presented the latest print-out on remaining American Rescue

Plan Act funds. Renauld proposed a computerized vote counting machine, which he believes will be faster and more cost effective than paying people to hand tally votes. This technically might require approval by the Town Clerk until the change to an appointed position goes through. Peloquin will confirm this with legal counsel.

Peloquin will research the costs for a ballot counting machine and the additional card access reader for the highway garage.

### Library

Additional discussions touched on the need to get the new library windows completed; the need for a by-law on back-billing for bills that were never sent out (as with the dog license fees during Covid) and clarification on where collected back bills would be deposited; a request from John McVeigh for a fundraising "thermometer" to be posted publicly (approved, with preference given to the Town Green). Jim Arnold was again approved to shovel sidewalks and Hilltown Firewood was again awarded the contract for sanding at Town Hall and Stanton Hall at the same rate as last year (\$95/storm).

### Business permits

This sparked a discussion led by Hathaway over the town doing business (in this instance, purchasing sand) with companies that do not have a town-issued business permit. Renauld responded that we purchase sand through Franklin Regional; the supplier has been advised that they need a permit but believe they are exempt because they carried over the permit from Donovan Sand and Gravel. However, Hathaway believes Donovan's permit expired before the sale. It was felt that numerous businesses in town are currently operating without a town business permit; Booth asked Peloquin to examine this further and report back.

### Highway garage

Future needs were also discussed and included roof and inside wall painting as well as upgrades to the highway garage. New Highway Superintendent Brad Curry begins on Dec. 4; there is

a final applicant for equipment operator and Peloquin will try to schedule that interview for the next Select Board meeting on Dec. 6. Also, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has a local technical assistance program for 2024 and suggested Huntington use it to update their open space plan at no cost to the town. Peloquin will have the request ready for signature at next week's Select Board meeting. Comcast has announced an infrastructure grant program that will allow them to connect high speed cable to houses set back from the road; the town just needs to write a letter of support (approved). Council on Aging Listening Sessions have concluded and one overarching finding is a desire for a senior center. Peloquin was authorized to begin looking at potential spaces.

### Other Business

In other business, the Board approved the discharge of a lien on a property loan to a Russell resident under the FY 2011 Huntington/Southern Hilltown Community Assistance Program. The loan has been paid off and as lead town, Huntington had to approve the discharge of the lien. Also, Dynegy has announced a new rate for the town's Community Choice Power Supply Program; Dynegy will be sending a letter to all town residents this month and is putting out a press release with their announcement.

Further, the Board approved a new computer for the Assistant Accountant/Assistant Collector, as the current computer is on the older side. Funds will be covered by the Computer/Software Purchase account.

The town needs to hold a tax classification hearing, but the assessors do not have approval on the new values from the Department of Revenue. Following DOR approval, the new values have to be posted on the town website for two days. The Select board agreed that they are available for a Wednesday, Dec. 13 meeting if needed. Renauld predicted that tax rates for most residents will rise in the third quarter with the new valuations, even though the overall tax rate is expected to decline.

## HUNTINGTON

# Town of Huntington announces holiday events

By Wendy Long

HUNTINGTON – The Huntington Community Events Committee is hosting their annual Gingerbread Decorating event on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 3-4 p.m. at Stanton Hall.

All supplies will be provided. Kits are limited so only people, who signed-up Dec. 3, will be able to participate.

Attendees are reminded to use the entrance off of the town green (Route 20 side), as construction for a new ramp to the other entrance is ongoing. This entrance is not handicapped accessible. People may contact the committee to make arrangements if they are unable to use the stairs.

The Huntington Recreation Committee is part of a multi-group event in town on Saturday, Dec. 16. For their

part, they are sponsoring a visit with Santa at the Gazebo on the Town Green at 3 p.m. Santa will be arriving by fire truck, courtesy of the Huntington Fire Department. The Recreation Committee will have refreshments and a small gift for children attending. People may email recreation@huntingtonma.us with any questions.

Following his visit, Santa will get back on the firetruck and go through town picking up toys for children, in a joint project supporting It Takes a Village.

Also, the Huntington Community Events Committee is sponsoring a Holiday Lights and Decorating event between Thursday, Dec. 14 from 4 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 17 to 9 p.m. Area residents who are decorating their homes or lawns, who wish to be added to the com-

mittee's map, should send their address via Facebook Messenger or by emailing communityevents@huntingtonma.us.

Maps will be posted by Thursday, Dec. 14 and drivers are free to view the houses at their leisure.



The Huntington Community Events Committee sponsor a holiday lights and decorating event. Submitted photo

## GREAT BARRINGTON

# Healey-Driscoll administration lists Community Transit Grant awards

BOSTON – The Healey-Driscoll Administration announces a total of more than \$4.7 million in funding awards to 43 organizations for 55 projects in the Community Transit Grant Program.

This annual competitive grant program, managed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, supports operating and mobility management projects for Regional Transit Authorities, municipalities and nonprofits to expand mobility for older adults and people with disabilities.

The grant awards will be funded through Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 funds, remaining CRSSA and ARPA funding through the FTA 5310 program and new funding made available to MassDOT through the FY24 state budget to expand the Community Transit Grant Program. In addition to these operating and mobility management grants,

MassDOT also awards fully accessible vehicles through the Community Transit Grant Program. People may learn more about the upcoming cycle may visit <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-community-transit-grant>.

The funding is for the Fiscal Year 2024 cycle, for operating and mobility management applications submitted in the summer of 2023. In total, in this announcement, MassDOT plans to distribute \$4,737,912 for mobility management and operating projects.

Update and improve the existing multi-town transportation coordination system by hiring a transportation consultant to create a transportation strategic plan, manage the RFP process and guide the Town through implementation.

Great Barrington received \$125,000 for continued funding for ride share technology and dispatch/scheduling software

to support micro transit operations and \$20,000 demand response shared ride micro-transit.

Hilltown Community Development Corporation received \$81,017 for the Hilltown Driver Pool program to supplement the van and offer demand response, donation-based rides for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities in a rural area that need help getting to medical appointments and grocery stores

In addition to the Community Transit Grant Program, MassDOT manages additional Commonwealth of Massachusetts grant programs benefiting municipalities, businesses, and the traveling public. The other grant programs include Municipal Small Bridge, Complete Streets, Industrial Rail Access, Shared Streets and Spaces and Shared Winter Streets and Spaces. For information on these programs, people visit [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).

# Annual fall dance concert

GREAT BARRINGTON – Bard College at Simon's Rock, 84 Alford Road, will present their annual fall dance concert this year on Friday, Dec. 8 and Saturday, Dec. 9, both performances at 7 p.m.

The choreography presented in the dance concert comes from the minds of Simon's Rock's students and faculty. This annual concert will feature a number of group and solo performances choreographed and rehearsed over the 2023 fall semester by Simon's Rock students. The Simon's Rock Dance Program and Concert is directed by Kati Garcia-Renart, Assistant Professor of Dance.

This event is free and open to the public. Seats are first come, first served. For more information on this event, people may visit <https://simons-rock.edu/events/index.php?eID=7712>.

### Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to [country-journal@turley.com](mailto:country-journal@turley.com), or call us at 413-283-8393. Corrections will be printed in the same section where the error originally occurred.

### ST. JUDE'S NOVENA

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

## NEED HELP WITH YOUR HOME REPAIRS?

Hilltown CDC has funding for the Housing Rehab Program. We're accepting applications from homeowners who live in Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Peru, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington who need help with their housing repairs. Here's a sample of some the work that can be performed under the Housing Rehab Program:

Roof and Foundation Repairs  
Heating System Repairs  
Plumbing and Electrical Repairs  
Windows and Doors Replaced

Septic Systems and Sewer Tie-in  
Handicap Accessibility Work  
New Wells Drilled; Pumps Repaired  
Lead Paint and Asbestos Removal

These are NO Interest/NO payment loans which may be entirely forgiven (if you are over 70 years of age the loan is forgiven faster), and all repair work is completed by a licensed contractor of your choice. Please don't delay, funding is available and you



may be surprised to find out you qualify. Contact Paula Bilodeau, Program Manager, at (413) 296-4536, ext. 109 or email [paulab@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:paulab@hilltowncdc.org) for more information and an application.

Funding is provided by the US Dept of HUD/ EOHLC and MA CDBG Programs via a Town of Chesterfield grant.

## EARLY DEADLINE For All Advertising & CLASSIFIEDS

All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 21 at Noon for Publication Dec. 25-29	:	All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 28 at Noon for Publication Jan. 1-5
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 24 Water Street Palmer, MA 01069 413-283-8393



# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN

### Seventy-five years and going strong



by Roberta McQuaid

I was opening the curtains in my bedroom this morning to find that my Babci's Christmas cactus had burst into bloom!

How exciting for an indoor plant to live for seven plus decades, never mind that the last two have been under my care. It's no secret that I am not an indoor plant aficionado, but I do have my favorites, and this is one of them.

Read on to learn about this beloved plant, straight from the archives.

One horticulture related Christmas memories involves my mother's Christmas cactus. I remember the arching, woody stemmed plant on an iron stand in her bedroom; before that it lived in my Babci's house.

Every year, just in time for the holiday, it would flower, putting on quite a show, beautiful and exotic in hot fuchsia-pink.

Today, only five original branches remain. But if you look closely within the base of the plant, you'll see lots of new growth.

Perhaps if I follow the advice, I have outlined below this heirloom will be blooming in the home of my future grandchildren!

The Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) is an epiphyte, native to South America where it happily grows hanging from trees in the jungle. Inside, it prefers a location with indirect light. Positioning it in front of a north or east facing window is best.

During the summer months many people

prefer to move the plant outdoors. I have had good luck placing it under the shade of a tree; too much sun will burn its leaves.

When night temperatures begin to dip into the forties it is time to bring the Christmas cactus indoors. Gradually acclimatize the plant to its winter home by increasing the number of hours spent inside each day.

It is very important that the Christmas cactus be planted in a well-drained growing medium. For this reason, either coarse sand or perlite should be added to any homemade potting soil.

A recipe that combines equal parts of either of these along with garden loam and leaf mold or compost should work out just fine. Christmas cactus like to be somewhat pot bound, but if the plant has been growing in the same pot for several years its soil is likely exhausted of nutrients.

Repot by gently teasing away some of the soil from the plant's roots. Replace it with the new soil mixture. Choose a pot that is a single size bigger than the existing root ball, or reuse the old pot.

Many people hear "cactus" and think that the plant is drought tolerant. With the Christmas cactus this is only partly true.

Although its leaves are succulent and can retain a fair amount of water, it is not a true cactus. As a general rule you should water Christmas cactus when the potting soil is dry to the touch.

Adequate moisture is especially necessary during the spring when it begins its growth and once buds are set. A diluted amount of liquid fertilizer can be added then as well, especially if the soil hasn't been refreshed in many years.

When the plant is done flowering, it will go into a period of rest; almost no water is

necessary for nearly two months. Just prior to bud set it will rest again but this time the soil shouldn't dry out completely.

Two environmental factors are responsible for coaxing a plant into bloom. The first is temperature and the second is light.

If temperatures at night range between 55 and 60 degrees for a six week period, the plant will set buds regardless of day length. If temperatures run higher than that, thirteen hours of uninterrupted darkness will bring about buds.

Simply put the plant to bed each night from 6 p.m.-8a.m. until buds form. My luck has been temperature related; because I leave the plants outside until early fall its temperature requirements are met and I am delighted with blooms come Christmas time.

If your plant sets buds and then drops them prior to full bloom it is likely due to overwatering or exposure. For this reason, keep it away from drafty windows, doorways or radiators.

If you don't already own Christmas cactus, consider purchasing one this holiday. Better yet, start a plant.

Simply get a leaf - no longer than two or three segments, from a friend. They are easy to root in regular potting soil.

Two or three of these per four inch pot is perfect. By year two you should be delighted with some beautiful flowers and maybe the start of your own family tradition.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

## We're planning to claim at 62; what do we need to know?



Dear Rusty

My wife (born May 1962) and I (born April 1963) are retired and will soon be looking to start collecting our Social Security as we each hit 62. As this is new to us, I'm wondering what things we may need to be aware of or consider as we get closer to her 62 birthday in May. Any advice or information will be appreciated.

Signed Planning Ahead

Dear Planning

If you and your wife are both retired from working and have decided to start your (reduced) Social Security as soon as you are eligible at age 62, then there is nothing you need to do in advance of applying. The Social Security retirement benefit amount for each of you will be determined by your individual lifetime earnings record and your age when you claim. If either of you will be eligible for a spousal boost from the other, that will be automatically applied when both of you are

collecting.

If your wife plans to claim her Social Security as soon as she is eligible, she should apply for her benefits about three months in advance and choose the option on the application which states "I want benefits beginning with the earliest possible month and will accept an age-related reduction."

For information, an applicant must be 62 for an entire month to get benefits, so your wife's first month of eligibility will be June 2024. Social Security deals only in whole months and pays benefits in the month following the month earned; so if your wife's birthday is between the 11th and 20th of the month her first Social Security payment will be received in her bank account on the third Wednesday of July. All subsequent payments will be on that same schedule.

Then, when it's time for you to claim, you should follow the same process as your wife and, if either of you is entitled to a higher amount as a spouse, it will be automatically applied when your benefits later start.

Applying for benefits is a relatively simple process if done online at [www.ssa.gov/apply](http://www.ssa.gov/apply). Note that to apply online your wife will need to first create her personal "my Social Security" account, which is easy to do at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

To prepare for applying later, you can also create your personal online account now (it's required to apply online), at which you will see what your estimated benefit will be at different ages. Of course, your wife first (and later you) can also call Social Security at 1-800-7721213 to request an appointment to apply for SS retirement benefits in person. Applications which are not done online are usually taken over the phone vs. requiring a visit to your local Social Security office, but applying online is, by far, the most efficient method; you can link to the application process from your online account.

One important thing to be aware of: By claiming at age 62, the monthly payment for each of you will be 70% of what it would be at your Full Retirement Age and that is a permanent reduction.

If you expect at least average longevity about 84 for you and 87 for your wife and if it is financially feasible, then waiting longer to claim would yield a higher monthly amount as well as the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. For those with an FRA of 67, SS retirement benefits claimed at FRA are 30% higher than at 62 and, if claimed at 70 are 75% more than at 62. And, although the decision on when to claim is always personal, a married couple should also evaluate their joint needs when deciding.

One final word of caution: although you and your wife are now retired from working, be aware that if you claim SS benefits before your FRA and return to work, Social Security has an earnings test which limits how much you can earn before some benefits are taken away. The earnings test lasts until you reach your full retirement age.

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



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# OPINION

## HILLTOWN HISTORY

### Smatterings from South Worthington

By Deborah Daniels  
Correspondent

There is an enchanted stretch of highway going north on Rt. 112 to Worthington.

The scenery will inspire you just as it has inspired the many artists who have chosen to live here. The road twists along the Little River causing snow plow drivers to gnash their teeth in winter, but making the rest of us long to stop and observe the beauty of a babbling brook.

My little car must think it queer to stop without a farmhouse near to enjoy the sight of a winding, boulder strewn river. The river is that close to the road, with each bend bringing you within an arm's reach of touching the river and grabbing a sense of peaceful serenity a la Robert Frost style.

You can't help but notice the large South Worthington sign on a red building on the corner of Thrasher Hill Road and Ireland Street. The building appears to be perched for a dive into the river below.

That is a clue to its history. There were many small mills located on the Little River since the late 1700s. The Little River is a tributary of the Westfield River. Yes, that Westfield River with three branches, the East, Middle and the West Branch, well this is none of the above.

Let's just say this is another branch of the wild and scenic Westfield River to confuse us. The Worthington Historical Society has identified that there was a Theron Higgins saw mill on this site that did custom sawing for the Episcopal church. That church dates from 1903, more about that later. There was also a saw mill further down the river run by a Bradley family. This would indicate that sawmills were prevalent on the Little River for over 100 years.

Note the photo of the Little River from the Worthington Historical Society and compare it to today's photo of the Little River just downstream from the red building. The River was roaring with energy in the vintage photo compared to today. There is a dam on Galilee Pond located a short distance down on Ireland Street that may help explain the more subdued river we see here today. Do you think Russell Conwell (1843-1925) had any influence in naming it Galilee pond? He was after all a famous Baptist minister, writer, founder of Temple University, Pennsylvania and influential speech maker. Most of his career was established in Philadelphia, but he did set up a



This is the red building on the corner of Thrasher Hill Road and Ireland Street on Rt. 112, taken in December.

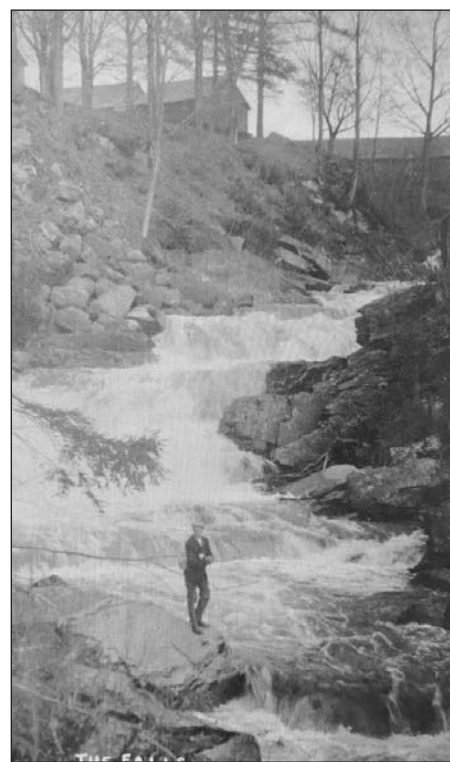
school in South Worthington.

The village of South Worthington became a center of local life in the 1950s, maintaining a church, a very popular general store, a repair shop for farm equipment and small factories that made window blinds and the Cederholm surveyor's wheel. There is a white steepled church just up the hill on Ireland Street.

Have your camera ready because it is so evocative of our old New England countryside. George Moody, who wrote the history of South Worthington in a book in the early 1900s, raised the funds to build this church. Do put this church in your prayers that it may still be here in 20 years time. There was another older church located across the street, now a residential house that was rumored to be a stop on the underground railroad. This is plausible as there were sympathizers to this cause known to live in this area.

So it seems the red mill building on the corner was the site of a saw mill, later said to have housed a basket making factory and later still the site of Carl Cederholm's factory making his surveyor's measuring wheel. How is that for staying relevant?

Across the street is the Sevenars Concert Center where you can attend classical music concerts. It too sits overlooking the Little River on a very old building, it was Russell Conwell's Academy building established in 1895. Robert Schrade, an internationally famous pianist with his wife Rolande, a composer, songwriter and famous pianist set up this center in 1968. They had five children, all clever pianists whose names begin with R which is how they named



Another vintage photo of the Little River in S. Worthington.

their enterprise seven Rs, Sevenars.

You can still attend concerts here. So this area is rich in history and culture despite a deceptively quiet appearance. Thank you to the Worthington Historical Society for providing a wealth of information on South Worthington. Where else can you learn that there were 10 automobiles in Worthington in 1926 and the Corner's Store was the first to install a gas pump that same year.



A vintage photo of a mill in South Worthington courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.

Submitted photos



Current view of the Little River taken from the bridge with just a sliver of the Sevenars Concert Center showing.

Course those hills taught a hard lesson to you and your shoe leather carrying spare petrol back to your auto Celebrate history.

And who painted that portrait of Jaws on the river boulder in the Little River? How about one of Trent the Trout? Take a deep breath and get outside this holiday time.

## CHESTERFIELD

### Silence White Bonney grave location found



This memorial stone marks the first burial in the Chesterfield Cemetery.

Submitted photo

CHESTERFIELD – The Chesterfield Cemetery Commission recently completed a project, which started several years ago when member Dee Cinner came across a description which described in detail the circumstances of the burial of Silence White Bonney, wife of Benjamin Bonney, who was the first recorded burial in Chesterfield in 1764.

The description revealed that Abiel Stetson had dug the grave in the present Center Cemetery and gave the exact location in rods starting from a point on the north boundary of the property of Archelaus Anderson. Since that time, property has been added to both the north and west edges of the cemetery.

In 2016, the new Cemetery Superintendent, Frederica Chick also became interested in the mystery of the location of Silence Bonney's

grave. Armed with calculations, numerous flags and Frederica's measuring wheel, she and Dee spent an afternoon in the cemetery measuring and marking and rechecking until they arrived at the end point. A barely detectable difference in elevation and color of the fall grass marked the grave site from 1764.

Design of the colonial style local schist stone was drawn up by Frederica who had the stone cut, shaped and finished at Ashfield Stone Company in Shelburne Falls. The installation of the stone with a brass plaque was recently completed to mark the first recorded burial in town. The plaque reads, "First Burial in Chesterfield, Silence White Bonney, d. 1764 ae. 27."

The memorial stone can be located by walking up the grass path by the vault at Center Cemetery. It is just past the patio on the left.

## MONTGOMERY

### Construction moves into next phase

MONTGOMERY/RUSSELL – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation announces construction activities will continue on the Woronoco Bridge project, which carries I-90 over the Westfield River on the Montgomery-Russell line, with a load posting restriction on the bridge.

The new posting went into effect as on Monday, Dec. 4 at 10 a.m. and will last approximately two years.

The current project began in 2020 and is about 60% complete. The bridge was previously rehabbed in 1990, 1994 and 2011. Trucks and other vehicles exceeding the posting (20 tons – 25 tons- 40 tons) will be subject to detour between exits 10 and 41

There will be weight restrictions in place during the remaining construction

BRIDGE, page 9

# BLANDFORD

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY HELD ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR



Barb Blair's with her assortment of Christmas Trees was one of the local artisans at the Blandford Historical Society craft fair. Photos courtesy of Lisa Bruno



Cindy Carr does hand painted glassware.



Chelsea Prokop had a large selection of hand knit hats.

## Country Store and Bistro to host giving opportunities

BLANDFORD – In partnership with the Hilltown Community Health Center Holiday Help Program, the Blandford Country Store and Bistro will be hosting “giving opportunities” for families in need during this holiday season.

People may stop by the Country Store and Bistro Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. or Sunday from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. at 98 Main St. They will find both the Mitten Tree and the

Holiday Food Basket available. Donations will be accepted until Saturday, Dec. 23. If people have any questions, they may call Jen Girard at the Blandford Country Store at 413-848-2800.

For the Mitten Tree, donations of gloves, mittens, hats or scarves for children are welcome and for the Holiday Food Baskets, donations of can or boxed foods, flour, sugar, dried milk, etc. for families.

## Christmas Concert rescheduled

BLANDFORD – The Christmas Concert at the First Congregational Church on Main Street has been rescheduled for Saturday, Dec. 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Dessert will follow the performance.

Pastor Ciprian Droma will sing accompanied by local pianist, Brent Chadwick.

## BOARD

from page 1

installed, take care of the whole building in an emergency.

The switch will cost about \$31,000 and funding will partially if not totally be covered by the American Rescue Plan Act.

The project may well go over \$100,000 and the bid process would look for a single bid, excluding the switch, to cover all the other costs of the necessary re-doing of bringing electricity into the building.

Once the bidding is in the works, the town will mandate a walk-through for prospective bidders so there is a clear idea of the work that needs to be done.

Chair Cara Letendre asked that VanHeynigen make sure the Finance Committee is aware that the town will need the funding for this project.

### Highway Department

Highway Department Superintendent David Waldron told the board that the Bicentennial Park tree had been trimmed;

he has prospective employee interviews on the calendar, and that the Water Department did locate a water leak, just past Kaolin Road in front of 9 Russell Stage Road.

Waldron also informed the board that the Highway Department has received a Risk Management award from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association which will be used to purchase dash cams with GPS tracking ability for the department's trucks.

Letendre told Waldron that she had spoken with Tree Warden Mark Boomsma suggesting that the two discuss tree trimming plans. Boomsma's work will, according to Letendre, be mostly concerned with Ash trees.

Board member Theodore Cousineau asked Waldron if his department could take down the flags with the cherry picker, which they will do, and also take down the service flags at the Highway Garage for the winter.

# MIDDLEFIELD

## Middlefield Dec. 16 event cancelled

MIDDLEFIELD – Both the Special Town Meeting and chicken dinner scheduled at the Town Hall on Saturday Dec. 16 have been cancelled.

## Blossom Community Center announces upcoming December events

MIDDLEFIELD – Scout Troop 120's fundraiser spaghetti and meatball dinner with seatings or to-go pickup on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 4:30-6 p.m. will be in the Blossom Center dining room, upper parking lot behind 16 Bell Road.

Second Sunday collaborative cooking will focus on holiday recipes, Dec 10 at 3:30 p.m. for cooking or

helping, and 5:30 p.m. for eating.

For New Moon, Tuesday, Dec 12 at 6 p.m. there will be bowls, gongs and chimes. People should wear comfortable clothes for sitting or lying down.

Third Friday Crafts is Friday, Dec. 15 at 5:30 p.m. on Dec 15. Third Monday Potluck Dinner is Monday, Dec 18 at 5:30 p.m.

## COA lists menu

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, on Wednesday, Nov. 22 will serve lunch at noon. The menu is eat in or take out. The choice is mushroom turkey Tetrazzini, cheeseburger chowder, roasted root vegetable and corn, French bread and chocolate chip oatmeal cookie. People should call 413-623-9990 to reserve a meal the previous Friday, Dec. 12. Suggested donation is \$3. Council on Aging Board meeting is at 1 p.m.

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## SCHOOLS & YOUTH

### Torchinsky graduates Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison

MADISON, WIS – Just over 1,300 students received doctoral, bachelor's, master's and professional degrees in August 2023 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Jason Torchinsky of Pittsfield earned a Doctor of Philosophy in mathematics from the College of Letters and Science. While there is no commencement ceremony in August, many of the graduates take part in the ceremonies the previous spring or in December.

### Gateway Regional announces honor roll

HUNTINGTON – Principal Jason Finnie, Gateway Regional High School, 12 Littleville Road, announced the honor roll for the first term of the 2023-2024 school year.

In accordance with the student handbook, honor roll status is granted to students with high academic achievement for a marking quarter.

**First honors** are awarded to students who receive A's in all courses taken. The following students earned first honors for this marking period: post graduate Heather McEwan; seniors Alexi Bonenfant, Jackson Harding, Abigail Madru, Kaitlyn Maynard, Reeghan Morawiec, Grace Plumley, and Sawyer Wilkinson; juniors Jesse Balboni, Madilyn Beneway, Ashley Fisk, Evan Forgue, Mason LaBranche, Olivia MacIver, Cynthia Papillon, Benjamin Pritchard, Abigail Robbins; sophomores

Theodore DeAngelis-Page, Kathryn Harding, Eliza Mueller, Lily Peloquin, Desmond St. Martin, Ashley Tacke and Michael Whitaker; and freshmen Elle DeMoss, Addison Green, Charlotte Hansen, Anna Niles, Levi Savoy and Amelia Steward-Frey.

**Second honors** are awarded to students who receive a minimum of two A's and receive B's in all other courses taken. Students earning second honors for this marking period are seniors Ollie DeBarge, Rachael Fitzgerald, Elijah Gilbert, Sean Kingsley, Natalie Loiselle, Angela Magyar, Joseph Pisani, Kai Rahilly, Anna Sakaske, Issabella Santiago, Dalton Savoy and Ryan Tacke; juniors Kyleigh Benson, Aden Carroll, Ivan Chepurensko; sophomores Jeffrey Antonellis, Bow Briggs, Andrew Chepurensko, Jake Marchbanks, Max Plumley, Justin Rucki, and

Ashley Scheinost and freshmen Angela Beneway, Jack Boyden, Landon Chaffee, Makayla Fernengel, Leah Fulton, Cameron Hepburn, Dylan Hepburn, Zachary Hess, David Kibe, Cailin Mckellick, Bella Moulton and Emilee Silvagni.

**Third honors** are granted to students who receive a minimum of one A, with B's and no more than one C in all courses taken. Students who earned third honors for the marking term are seniors Dylan Buckman, Jaylin Glenn, Matthew Kadzik, William King, Caiden Parker and Emily Wing; juniors Haven Gates, Adam Krassler, Jaidon Plant, and Joel Precanico; sophomores Lucas Gilbert, Ana Holmes, Erica Madru, Lilliana Mitchell and Grace Campbell and freshmen Roan Boeri, Yan Cirino, Duston Clark, Calvin Crevier and Jacob Maynard.

### HRMS lists academic excellence

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional Middle School, 19 Stage Road, announces academic achievement.

**Seventh graders** receiving academic excellence are: Madison Bannish, Austin Barcomb, Elizabeth Barry, Elaina Bigda, Samantha Black, Victoria Bond, Gabriel Carrasquillo, Hazel Chute, Grayson Clark, Raquelle Denoronha, Sabella Donatelli, Leila Doolittle, Jacqueline DuCharme, Gabriella Dybacki, Talya Eiseman, Lauren Filipek, Isabella Fini, Jacob Fisette, Emersen Florek-Grader, Savannah Fredette, Jackson Galenski, Ryan Garvey, Lexie Gauger, Samantha Gay, Jaymes Goddard, Talia Goddard, Aiden Goyette, Daniel Guiel, Willow Gutermuth, Mackenzie Harrison, Noah Haryasz, Madison Johnson, Savannah Judd, Saoirse Keane, Margaret Kugler, Natalie Labrie, Sophia Lashway, Anna MacLachlan, Felicity Manganelli, Elle Marcinek, Nora McCarthy, Emma McDonald, Colton McVeigh, Noa Nabut, Teagan Noel, Damian Pasiut, Mason Pedersen, Connor

Perkins, Abigail Phelan, Mackenzie Provost, Elka Pruzynski, Kacey Reed, Caleb Riel, Karolina Robak, Adalynn Roberts, Holly Sampson, Hazel Scully-Henry, Destiny Slack, Austin Sojkowski, Emmett Stith, Kendall Sullivan, Nicholas Theroux, Addison Thomas, Anna Tompkins, Sadie Wasiuk, Brody Watkins, Ava Westcott, Jack White, Jax Williams, Danielle Wolf and Tarlo Zerbach.

**Eighth graders** making academic excellence are: Cooper Alexander, Persephone Bennett, Isaac Clark, Amanda Clemeno, Ada Corner, Brianna Day, Kalin Dubay, Rosemarie Estelle, Gabrielle Falkowski, Kylie Grimsley, Alana Hanke, Hayden Hyde, Logan LaPointe, Samantha Law, Charlotte Letendre, Olivia Lockwood, Moira Long, Isabella Matthew, Olivia McAvoy, Charlotte Niswonger, Luke Pickard, Caroline Puttick, Fiona Reynolds, Elise Rida, Lukasz Robak, Torin Rowlett, Katherine Sturtevant, Keira Tataro and Madelyn Zannotti.

### HRMS lists academic achievement

WESTHAMPTON – Hampshire Regional Middle School, 19 Stage Road, announces academic achievement.

**Seventh graders** receiving academic achievement are Erin Benard, Julia Bertera, Eric Berube, Joseph Bianca, Miles Cameron, Becky Cote, Lily Cruz, Ryleigh Eline, Jailin Ericson, Sage Fisk, Mason Hean, Carter Heath, Thomas Janik, Hayden Johnson, Henry Judd, Vivienne Mendes, Matthew Nadolski, Ethan Neylon, Kennae O'Connell, Shane Radon, Zachary Raffa, Benjamin Raymond, Maeve Reynolds, Leobin Reyor, Joslyn Sexton, Suleman Shahid, Sienna Steffenhagen, Balin Sullivan, Amaya Torres Mor, Ethan White and Brooke York.

**Eighth graders** receiving academic achievement are: Nelly Albitz, Logan Andrades, Dexter Bonczek, Andrew Buchachiy, Declan Butler, Colby Cabrini, Ace Charette, Mallory Christy, Talia Craig, Weston Crawford, Noah Cruz, Griffin Darling, Madline Desilets, Addison DuCharme, Alexander Florek, Jackson Garcia, Brady Geffin, Natalie Goodridge, Grant Jennings, Abigail Kaufmann, H. Kellogg, Lilian Lumbr, Penelope Lynn, Grace Malo, Micah Marino, Samuel Mathews, Alexandria Montague, Mason Normandin, Raelyn Osetek, Patrick Schmidt, Grace Scoble, Dominic Servaes, Lucy Skawski, Estella Steffenhagen, Connor Tefft, Malcolm Todd, Valerie West, Joseph Wright and Honor Zigmund.

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Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 8, 2023

## SANDISFIELD

### Hilltown Hikers to host 4-mile hike

SANDERSFIELD – The Western Massachusetts Hilltown Hikers will host a moderate hike consisting of a four-mile loop on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 11:30 a.m. to York Lake.

Participants should park at Sandisfield State Forest in the parking lot by York Lake at the intersection Route 183/New Marlborough-Sandisfield Road and East Hill Road. The first leg of the hike is easy to moderate with a 2.2 mile loop around York Lake. The group then will hike less than a quarter of a mile to the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp to take part in the Department of Conservation and Recreation CCC Ceremony at 2 p.m. People may come for the hike at 11:30 p.m., come for the ceremony at 2 p.m., or stay for both.

This is a two-part day at the Sandisfield State Forest, with 9,500 total acres of forest including York Lake a shallow 35 acre man-made lake. Elevation of the lake is 1,544 feet and is named after Samuel A. York, a farmer from Cummington who was DCR Commissioner in 1933. The trail is 2.2 miles long around the lake with bridges, wildlife, Norway Spruce and Scotch

Pine plantations. Once flat farmland of Township Number three, Sandisfield was incorporated in 1762.

On Dec. 16, 1934 five young men from 196 Company, Civilian Conservation Corps (this state forest) were killed in a truck accident on their way to church in Great Barrington. At 2 p.m., DCR staff dressed in era uniforms, will hold a ceremony here including a wreath laying and taps as a 48 star flag is retired. CCC artifacts will be available for viewing. They will also visit the site of the old camp S-71 and its relics and learn about the Sandisfield “Beavers,” who built York Lake.

People should register per car load by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com>. Maps and bottled water provided. Hikers should be prepared for rocks, roots and some elevation. They will hike rain or shine. Friendly dogs are welcome.

Suggestion donation is \$10, hike is volunteer lead. More details are available by visiting [www.hilltownhikers.com](http://www.hilltownhikers.com). People may email [westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com](mailto:westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com) or call/text 413-302-0312 if they have any questions.

## WORTHINGTON

### Tree lighting postponed to Dec. 10

WORTHINGTON – Due to expected bad weather, the Holiday Tree Lighting is postponed to Sunday, Dec. 10 at 4 p.m. on the Town Pond.

Lighting will take place once it is dark around 5 p.m. Santa will arrive at 4:45 p.m. via the Worthington Fire Department at the Pond with the sirens blazing. Santa

will have something special for the children. There will be carolers throughout the evening. There will be a fire pit, light refreshments including coffee, hot chocolate, cookies, soups and more.

The Worthington Parks and Recreation Department and Within Worthington, 501c3, host the event.

## HAYDENVILLE

### Sen. Mark announces staff office hours

BOSTON – State Senator Paul W. Mark announces his staff will host office hours in Williamsburg from two days in December, on Tuesdays, Dec. 12 and Dec. 19 from 1-3 p.m. in the Town Offices, 141 Main St., Haydenville.

Residents of any of the 57 munic-

ipalities in the Senator’s Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District are encouraged to ask for assistance with issues involving any state agency or to share ideas on current or potential state legislation. Appointments are not required.

## CHESTER

### JLBA to hold Christmas party

CHESTER – Jacob’s Ladder Business Association will hold a Snack and Schmooze on Thursday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. in the historic Chester Rail Station, located at 10 Prospect St.

This networking combination of Christmas party and feasting with schmoozing will also be utilized

for the Annual Meeting. Food will be provided by the Blue Note Cafe. Unfortunately we will not have pictures with Santa.

Catering by Classic Pizza/The Blue Note Cafe. This event is sponsored by the JLBA to promote Business in the Hilltowns.

## BECKET

### Becket Athenaeum lists events

BECKET – The Becket Athenaeum, 3367 Main St., serves Becket and Washington.

On Saturday, Dec. 9 at 10:30 a.m. Creative Movement and Story Time will be held. Children will hear a story and practice creative movement with Laurel Lenski. RSVP by visiting [bitly/BA-storytime](http://bit.ly/BA-storytime). The Cookbook Club will meet Monday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. This month instead of everyone cooking from the same cookbook, people should bring a favorite dish to share along with the printed recipe.

They should RSVP by emailing [info@BWLibrary.org](mailto:info@BWLibrary.org). An optional cookie sway will also take place. Each participant should bring three

to four dozen of the same type cookie or bar and gets to take home a variety baked by the others. The more bakers the more variety there will be.

Game night will be held Wednesday, Dec. 13 from 5-7 p.m. at the library. People are invited to come play board and card games. Refreshments will be served. This is for ages 13 plus. People should visit [bit.ly/BA-Dec-game](http://bit.ly/BA-Dec-game).

The Athenaeum also has a gift making table with everything to make: hot chocolate in a mug, gift wrap and cards, friendship bracelets, holiday ornaments, junk journals, pet toys and more with rotating availability.

## WILLIAMSBURG

### Library hosts Miranda Pierce Art

WILLIAMSBURG – Miranda Pierce will exhibit her art work at the Meekins Library, 2 Williams St., in the Neil Hammer Gallery now through Saturday, Dec. 30.

This Miranda Pierce is interested in telling stories with words and pictures. She composes thoughts as text drawings, frames found still lives as photographs and arranges colorful items from dollar stores as sculptures, using humor, focus and abstraction to reverse stuff and junk.

Utilizing formalist qualities and rigor she finds beauty amidst that which is discarded, dismissed or often

overlooked. She subverts the notion of the appropriate conversation, the appropriate subjects, the appropriate materials.

Pierce was born in New Hampshire and raised in Williamsburg. She attended Anne T. Dunphy, Helen E. James, Hampshire Regional, The Academy at Charlemont and Smith College. She’s lived in Western Mass and California. She worked for many years at SFMOMA. She’s currently an administrator at the School of Visual Arts. She lives in New York City.

There will be a closing reception on Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 3 p.m.

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BRIDGE

from page 5

phases, but these will have no effect on passenger vehicles or most other traffic. Only loads over the bridge posting will be detoured off the roadway between exit 10 in Lee and exit 41 in Westfield.

Loads over posting will be detoured off I-90 onto Routes 20 and 202/10. This is the most direct route as Route 20 mostly parallels I-90 and adds only an additional six miles of total length to a trip. The entirety of the detour is on state highways with the exception of 2.4 miles

in the City of Westfield.

Tandem vehicles exceeding the 40-ton posted weight limit will be required to decouple in advance of exit 41 for vehicles heading westbound and in advance of exit 10 for vehicles heading eastbound.

The scope of the project includes staged deck replacement, deck truss spans repairs, gusset plate reinforcement, replacement of rivets with high-strength bolts and paint work. The entire

project is budgeted at \$47 million dollars.

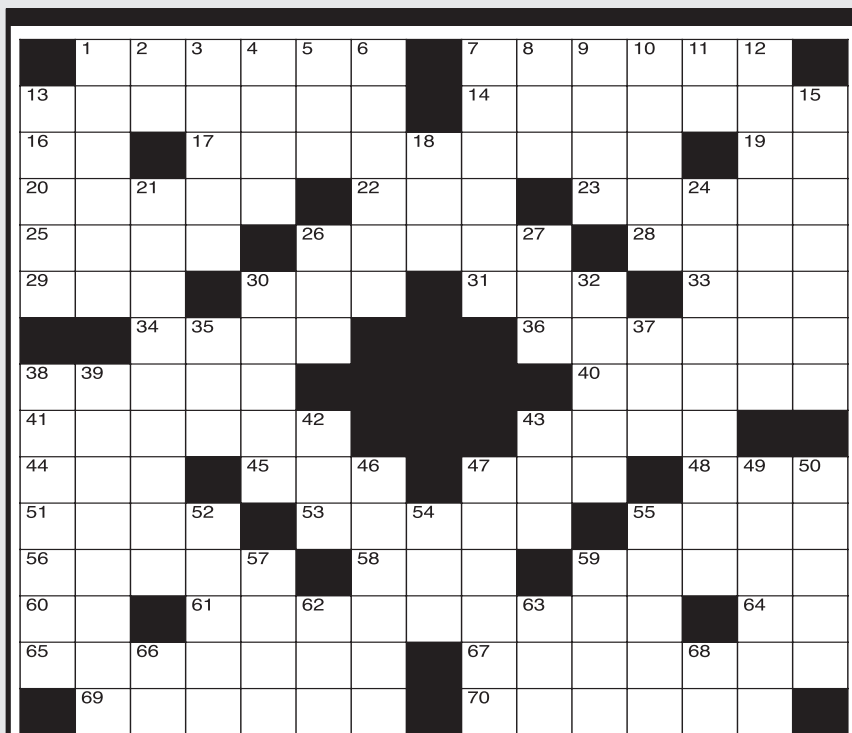
Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and messaging will be in place to guide drivers through the work area. Drivers who are traveling through the affected areas should expect delays, reduce speed and use caution. All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

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.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Spiritual leaders
- 7. Salt
- 13. Fortified wine
- 14. Edible mollusk
- 16. It begins with them
- 17. A way to compare
- 19. Government lawyer
- 20. Back parts
- 22. 8th month (abbr.)
- 23. Very willing
- 25. \_\_\_ ex machina
- 26. Satisfies
- 28. Quebec river
- 29. A doctrine
- 30. Popular pickup truck
- 31. Dekagram
- 33. Naturally occurring solid material
- 34. Company officer
- 36. Villains
- 38. Cricket frogs
- 40. German founder of psychology
- 41. Endured
- 43. A female domestic

- 44. A "place" to avoid
- 45. Cigarette (slang)
- 47. Canadian politician Josephine
- 48. French ballet/acting dynasty
- 51. Employee stock ownership plan
- 53. Belonging to the bottom
- 55. Sound
- 56. Yankees' slugger Judge
- 58. Dickens character
- 59. More wise
- 60. Flash memory card
- 61. Exposing human vice or folly to ridicule
- 64. Atomic #79
- 65. Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- 67. Humor
- 69. Shawl
- 70. Preliminary assessment of patients

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Animal disease
- 2. Commercial
- 3. Craft supply
- 4. Storage units
- 5. Investment vehicle
- 6. Colorado Heisman winner
- 7. In a way, sank
- 8. Post-birth brain damage (abbr.)
- 9. Lay about
- 10. Intestinal
- 11. The opposite of yes
- 12. Caused to be loved
- 13. Messianic in Islamic eschatology
- 15. Showing since conviction
- 18. Not safe
- 21. The number above the line in a fraction
- 24. Yard invader
- 26. Pouch
- 27. Swedish krona
- 30. Start anew
- 32. While white or
- 35. Fourteen
- 37. Graphical user interface
- 38. Up-to-date on the news
- 39. Campaigns
- 42. Touch softly
- 43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- 46. Violent seizure of property
- 47. One who supports the Pope
- 49. Anxiety
- 50. Body fluid
- 52. Phony person
- 54. Title of respect
- 55. Chilean city
- 57. City in central Japan
- 59. Silk garment
- 62. Draw from
- 63. Automobile
- 66. Man
- 68. Legal bigwig (abbr.)

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20  
If you work or spend time with an introvert, reach out to him or her and strike up a conversation. This person may only need a little nudge to become a good friend.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22  
This is a good week to begin something that you've been thinking about tackling. You'll have pep in your step and others willing to lend a hand if it is needed.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23  
Whatever you tackle this week, it shouldn't revolve entirely around money, Libra. Finances may have gotten in the way of things for some time; focus now on relationships.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20  
You may be coveting something of late, Capricorn. However, only when you stop actively wanting that thing or person will you finally get what you desire.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21  
A friendly competition that may have started out lighthearted is now starting to transform into something a bit more competitive. Dial it back a bit.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23  
Leo, someone may offer you some honest feedback that is a little too raw for your ego at this point in time. You will simply have to take it with dignity and lick your wounds elsewhere.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22  
Don't let a dream you had put you all in a tizzy, Scorpio. That was just your subconscious working through some things and not a prediction of things to come.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18  
Aquarius, your positive attitude is an asset in life. Even as challenges come your way this week, you can prove the naysayers wrong by maintaining your rosy outlook.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21  
Gemini, things are starting to slow down in your life, and your to-do list has gotten shorter. Expect things to ramp up again soon enough, but enjoy the break for now.

VIRGO

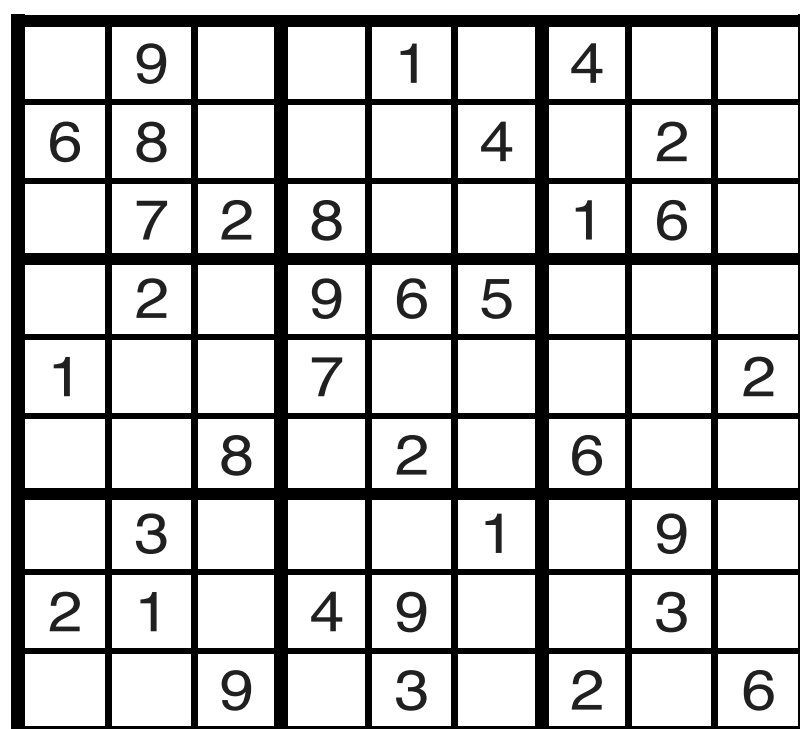
Aug 24/Sept 22  
You need to be the driving force on a project that will pop up, Virgo. Even though you're not sure of your readiness for this type of work, you can give it a good attempt.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21  
Don't be shy about receiving credit for something that you did, Sagittarius. You deserve the recognition no matter how large or small the task. Celebrate all your victories.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20  
Pisces, standing up for yourself this week is challenging, but you need to do it to get your point across. Don't worry, you have many supporters in your corner cheering you on.



SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:

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

Fun By The Numbers

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

**answers**

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# NORTHAMPTON

## Cancer Connection offer free Reiki

NORTHAMPTON – Cancer Connection, Inc., 41 Locust St., announces the return of one of its most popular services, free monthly Reiki nights, at a new venue, the State Room, 35 State St.

Reiki has been used for years to reduce stress, pain and anxiety, and to achieve body and mind relaxation. Tufts Medical Center notes, “By integrating Reiki therapy and other complementary holistic services into your traditional cancer treatments...Reiki sessions may help manage symptoms and side effects of chemotherapy and other medications, as well as improve health problems such as anxiety, pain, fatigue and insomnia.”

Cancer Connection, is excited to offer monthly, half-hour Reiki sessions formatted in a group setting. Each participant will be on a separate Reiki table and will have not one, but two certified volunteer Reiki Practitioners working on them at the same time. Reiki tables are a safe distance apart and staff will be wearing masks. Comfortable low lighting and sound healing music will create a soothing atmosphere for clients to feel the wonderful healing energies flowing into their bodies from the practitioners’ hands.

These new monthly sessions will take place every second Tuesday of the month except for January and August at The State Room at 35 State St. The next session is Tuesday, Dec. 12 The entrance is located on the side street on the left side of the building. Clients may use metered street parking or the Northampton parking garage. Parking is not permitted in the private back parking lot.

Sessions will begin at 6 p.m., with the last session starting at 8 p.m. and ending at 8:30 p.m. This is a first come, first served event for anyone diagnosed with cancer or their caregiver. Sign-ups are not required and walk-ins are welcome.

Founded in 2000, Cancer Connection’s mission is to provide a haven where people with cancer and their loved ones can learn how to navigate the complicated cancer journey through one-to-one guidance, education, peer support, integrative therapies, and creative programs. Cancer Connection is the only cancer support center in Hampshire and Franklin Counties and draws additional participants from Hampden County and beyond. All of Cancer Connection’s services are provided free of charge.

## Dr. Siddiqui joins medical advisory team

NORTHAMPTON – In September, Dr. Ahmad Daniyal Siddiqui joined the Mass. General Cancer Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital as Medical Director of Medical Oncology.

At Cooley Dickinson, Dr. Siddiqui leads the center’s clinical care and operations and collaborates closely with physician colleagues at the Mass. General Cancer Center in Boston. In addition, Dr. Siddiqui is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts’ Chan Medical School in Worcester.

“We are so grateful to Dr. Siddiqui for bringing his deep knowledge and compassionate expertise to serve Cancer Connection,” said Chelsea Kline, Executive Director. “We are proud to have the highest level of cancer care to advise our organization and help those experiencing cancer.”

Founded in 2000, Cancer Connection’s mission is to provide a haven where people with cancer and their loved ones can learn how to navigate the complicated cancer

journey through one-to-one guidance, education, peer support, integrative therapies, and creative programs. Cancer Connection, 41 Locust St., is the only cancer support center in Hampshire and Franklin Counties and draws additional participants from Hampden County and beyond. All of Cancer Connection’s services are provided free of charge.

Dr. Siddiqui shares Cancer Connection’s commitment to helping cancer patients and their loved ones feel informed, empowered and comforted. “When someone is diagnosed with cancer, they need good explanations about what is happening, so they are not in the dark,” Dr. Siddiqui said. “A well-informed patient, plus a caring, competent, compassionate cancer care team equals the best outcomes for people going through cancer.”

Dr. Siddiqui joins Dr. Orion Howard, Medical Oncologist and Hematologist at Mass. General Cancer Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, as members of the medical advisory team at Cancer Connection.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### MORTGAGEE’S NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL ESTATE

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain Mortgage given by Robert T. Briand and Maura A. Gamache to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Full Spectrum Lending, Inc., its successors and assigns, dated February 11, 2004 and recorded with the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 7694, Page 45, subsequently assigned to The Bank of New York Mellon FKA The Bank of New York, as Trustee for the benefit of the Certificateholders of the CWABS Inc., Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2004-3 by Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. by assignment recorded in said Hampshire County Registry of Deeds at Book 10905, Page 217 for breach of the conditions of said Mortgage and for the purpose of fore-

closing same will be sold at Public Auction at **11:00 AM on December 28, 2023** at 40 Littleville Road, Huntington, MA, all and singular the premises described in said Mortgage, to wit:

That parcel of land located on the Southwesterly side of the highway from Norwich Bridge to Littleville sometimes called the North Chester Road, in said Huntington, bounded and described as follows:

Beginning in an iron pin set in the Southwesterly line of said highway at the Southeasterly corner of the track herein conveyed, it being the Northeastly corner on said highway of land now or formerly of Guy A. Fist Estate,

thence running Southwesterly along land of said Estate of Guy A. Fist, two hundred thirty-eight feet, four inches, more or less, to an iron pin at a corner;

thence running Northwesterly along land of

said Estate of Guy A. Fist, two hundred forty-eight, five inches, more or less, to an iron pin at a corner;

thence running Northeastly along said land of the Estate of Guy A. Fist, ninety-seven feet, six inches, more or less, to an iron pin at a corner,

thence running Northeastly one hundred thirty-eight feet, three inches, more or less, along other land of this grantor, Elsie M. LaFond, in a straight line, to an iron pin located on said Southwesterly side of the highway, Northwesterly of the point of beginning;

thence running Southeastly along the line of said highway, three hundred eighty-nine feet, four inches, more or less, to the point of beginning.

Subject to easement to New England Telephone & Telegraph Company dated July 19, 1937 and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book

926, Page 139 if applicable. For our Title see Deed of Robert T. Briand to Robert T. Birand and Maura A. Gamache dated June 1, 2001, recorded on June 1, 2001 at Hampshire Registry of Deeds, Book 6231, Page 69. The premises are to be sold subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, encroachments, building and zoning laws, liens, unpaid taxes, tax titles, water bills, municipal liens and assessments, rights of tenants and parties in possession, and attorney’s fees and costs.

**TERMS OF SALE:** A deposit of FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND 00 CENTS (\$5,000.00) in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer’s check or money order will be required to be delivered at or before the time the bid is offered. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Foreclosure Sale Agreement immediately after the close of the bidding. The balance

of the purchase price shall be paid within thirty (30) days from the sale date in the form of a certified check, bank treasurer’s check or other check satisfactory to Mortgagee’s attorney. The Mortgagee reserves the right to bid at the sale, to reject any and all bids, to continue the sale and to amend the terms of the sale by written or oral announcement made before or during the foreclosure sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee’s attorney. The description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

TIME WILL BE OF THE ESSENCE.

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

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By Its Attorneys,  
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Waltham, MA 02454  
Phone: (781) 790-7800  
22-004385

12/07, 12/14, 12/21/2023

### Town of Worthington Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing

The Town of Worthington Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing **Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 7:15 PM** in the Town Hall to consider the filing of a Notice of Intent for the following project: Route 143 Reconstruction, Phase Two (from Cold Street to the Peru town line).

12/07/2023

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

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

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

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## Early Deadlines for all LEGAL NOTICES...

All Papers Will Deadline **Thursday, Dec. 21 at Noon for Publication Dec. 25-29**

*Happy New Year!*

All Papers Will Deadline **Thursday, Dec. 28 at Noon for Publication Jan. 1-5**

*Happy Holidays!*

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## HELP WANTED

**Town of Worthington Highway Position Opening**

The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest from qualified candidates for the full-time position of **Equipment Operator/General Laborer** in the Town Highway Department. Valid MA CDL operator, Hydraulic Hoister's licenses and OSHA-10 certification is preferred. Further information can be found on the Town's website: **www.worthington-ma.us**

Questions will be answered by the Highway Superintendent at 64 Huntington Road, Monday - Friday, 7 AM to 3 PM; the telephone number is 413-238-5830.

Send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: **worthingtonhighway@gmail.com** or to Worthington Highway Department, P. O. Box 643, Worthington, MA. This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.

*The Town of Worthington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*

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# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES

## Exploring Shaker settlement

HANCOCK – Saturday’s flash hike took us to Hancock to hike the Shaker settlement.

Parking on Route 20 across from the Shaker Hancock Village the trail goes into the woods as part of the Pittsfield State Forest. The Shakers were believers in the millennialism principal, that “heaven on earth” is possible.

This religious order believed this concept could be achieved through communal living, pacifism, celibacy, gender equality and the public confession of sin. Today this utopian sect is renowned for its plain architecture and furniture.

The Shakers trace their origin to the religious ferment of Manchester, England,

in 1747. They called themselves The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing. Worship could take the form of singing and ecstatic dance, which is why they were popularly called the “Shaking Quakers” or “Shakers.”

They believed that Christ’s second coming was personified in their leader Ann Lee, whom they called Mother Ann. Misunderstood and persecuted in England, the Shakers gathered a small group of enthusiastic followers to their new Christian lifestyle and beliefs. In 1774, Mother Ann Lee led eight Shaker converts from Manchester, England, to America, seeking freedom to live, work and worship.

The reservoir here supplied water to the village, built by the shakers, water from Shaker Brook supplied the power for a carding mill, tannery, fulling, grist and sawmill. The cellar hole for the North Family dwelling can be seen here. Along the trail look out for all the signage, like the marble quarry in the hill to the left, where we found marble and slate.

All here can be viewed and hiked in an easy two miles along both sides of the brook. The high dam partially standing along with the water works, low dam and mill foundations make this a great exploration area. On the 6.7 mile loop, the Hikers climbed Doll Mountain to the Holy Mount.

A beautiful vista known as the Feasting Ground with perfect stonewall fences, a building separated for brethren and sisters. Stone walls are three foot wide at the base, a 12-18 foot section would have taken one man’s labor in a day. It is estimated the stone fence surrounding the 45 acre Sacred Lot required 350 man-days to complete.

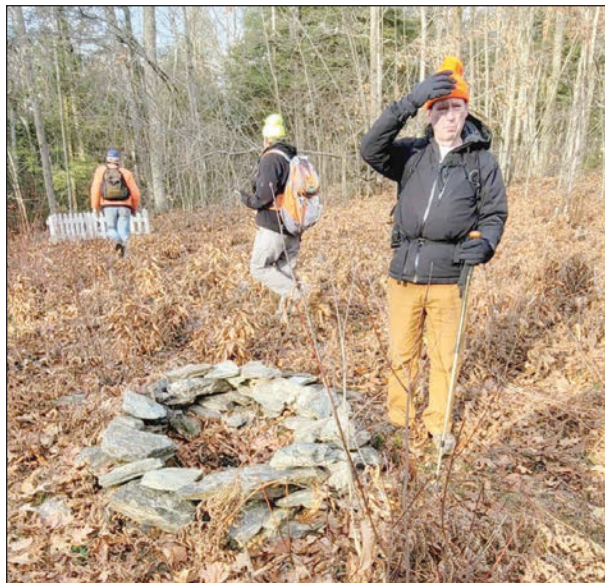
At the southwest corner of the Sacred Lot is a spring and amphitheater. “...so that the voices of the united brethren and sisters, on a clam still day, may be heard by each society, rising, like the twin-mountain-tops from which the sounds ascend, toward the Heaven to which they alike aspire.” (1848)



Hilltown Hiker Russ stands at the upper dam.



Submitted photos This view of the lower dam shows the penstock to divert water to the mills downstream.



Frank is shown atop Mount Sinai, the feasting ground for the Hancock Shakers.



Adam is at the Shaker’s marble quarry. Marble and slate from here was used to build their building foundations.



The Hilltown Hikers admire a well made stone wall.

## WESTHAMPTON

### TRAVELING THROUGH WESTHAMPTON ON A FOGGY MORNING



This photo was taken in Westhampton on Monday morning just as the sun breaks through the fog.

Courtesy Photo by Bill Madden

## FLORENCE

### FHHC welcomes Dr. Christine Kelley

FLORENCE – Florence Hearing Health Care (FHHC) announced Dr. Christine Kelley, Au.D., has joined their team.

Florence Hearing Health Care, a private audiology clinic serving western Massachusetts and beyond, welcomed Dr. Christine Kelley as an official member of their team recently as a way to support the ever-growing need of quality care in the Hampshire County area.

Dr. Kelley earned her Doctoral degree in Audiology from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

As a student, she was one of a handful of students picked to be a presenter at the student research forum in 2009 at the American Academy of Audiology annual convention. Christine completed her fourth year at New York Eye and Ear in New York City. Christine is originally from Long Island and has lived in Western Mass since 2010. Dr. Kelley holds a Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association.

Kelley knew she wanted to be an audiologist after volunteering at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech during her time at the University of Massachusetts as an undergraduate stu-

dent in the Communications Disorders department. She saw first hand how hearing loss and hearing aids directly impact peoples’ lives and was inspired to help others hear their world and communicate with friends and family. She also knows what it is like to live with someone with hearing loss as her husband has had hearing loss since birth and worn hearing aids since childhood. The experience of sharing a life with someone with hearing loss gives her a unique perspective of understanding the everyday struggles that can occur when someone has a hearing loss and how it affects their family around them as well.

The practice aims to educate the community about hearing health care, including the signs of hearing loss and the available treatment options that can improve the quality of life for those who experience it, as well as encourage adults to get a baseline hearing test and to protect the hearing they do have. FHHC works with their clients to meet them where they are in their hearing health care journey.

If interested in interviewing Dr. Jennifer Sowards or Dr. Christine Kelley people may email Meghan Rothschild at meghan@chikmedia.us.