

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

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

December 18, 2025 | Vol. 47, No. 34 | 75¢

www.countryjournal.turley.com

CHESTER

Rail car to move to Chester Railway Station

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

CHESTER – A Chester Select Board meeting was posted for Monday, Dec. 8 at 4 p.m., allowing town personnel and board members from the Chester Railway Station and Museum to iron out the last steps in moving an old train car to the museum's location on Prospect Street.

Currently, the rail car is waiting next to the rail-

road tracks behind Chester Common Table Restaurant for the final phase of its journey. Once retired from railway service, the car had served as a dining room at Bernie's Dining Depot on James Street in Chicopee, which closed its doors in 2022. The popular diner was famous in Western Massachusetts for its generous portions of roast beef.

The meeting allowed timeframes and details to be worked out between

the town, museum, and the contractors hired to oversee the move. Present were Police Chief Jennifer Dubiel, Fire Chief Nate Bolduc, Highway Superintendent Chipper Dazelle and Town Administrator Andrew Alward, among others. Enough select board members attended to create a quorum and that potential had led Alward to post it as a Select Board meeting.

RAILWAY, page 7



The former dining car from Bernie's Dining Depot in Chicopee has made it to a lot behind Chester Common Table. The final phase of its journey is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 22, weather permitting. Iron Mountain Iron and Equipment and Red's Towing will work together to move the car to its new location at the Chester Railway Station and Museum on Prospect Street.

Turley Publications photo by Wendy Long

Christmas lights shine



This baby seemed interested in the colorful lights at Worthington's tree lighting celebration. See more photos on page 10.

Photo by Debbi Dreschnack

BLANDFORD

Voters approve library expansion project

By Mary Kronholm
Correspondent

It was truly a community coming together to support the expansion program for the Porter Memorial Library.

There were 93 registered voters at the Special Town Meeting Tuesday, Dec. 9 at the Town Hall.

A number of parents with their small children and even babies, came out at 7 p.m. on a frigid evening to vote in favor of the expansion.

Moderator David Hopson called the vote unanimous after a standing vote.

Many were at the information session immediately prior to the STM where Skanska Owners Project Manager Aaron Singer explained that the cost to the town would be 15% of the total cost, given the \$5,479,539 grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The "game changer" was the bequest of \$890,000 from the trust of Sumner Robbins, along with the additional \$10,000 from the Library Trustees, which brought the town's cost down.



Drumme Rosane Anderson, Inc. architect James Barrett discusses the new floor plan as Library Director Nicole Daviau looks on.

Turley Publication photos by Mary Kronholm

Singer further explained that if the library were to be brought up to current public building safety code, with an access ramp, a second entrance/exit for emergencies, proper sanitary accommodations and more, the cost would then be greater than what the cost will be to the town for the expansion. Plus, there would be no additional space added to the library for programming, community meetings, etc.

LIBRARY, page 6



Library Director Nicole Daviau points out plans for the expansion, flanked by Skanska Owners Project Manager Aaron Singer, Skanska Project Communications Manager Victoria Clifford and Library Building Committee Chair David Hopson.

CHESTER

New town administrator completes first quarter

By Wendy Long
Correspondent

The town of Chester named Andrew Alward as its new Town Administrator, replacing former Senator Don Humason, who had served in the position previously.

Alward began the post on Aug. 25 at a salary of \$68,400. Humason mentored the new administrator until mid-October.

Alward had served on the Board of Selectmen for 8-1/2 years for the town of Millville with a population of just over 3,000 residents at the 2020 census. His professional experience included working in accounting and retail operations for a bank and as an operations manager for independent financial advisors.

Alward sees his role in the town as a facilitator between different depart-

ments to make sure everything runs smoothly and as a point person for the select board. His goal is to make sure town operations run as efficiently and seamlessly as possible, and he will have a role in managing contracts and finances.

Alward said that finances are always a challenge for any town and Chester is no exception. "You have some great employees here and you want to pay them well and treat them right," he said. "But being a town, we have limitations and it is a hard thing to achieve."

Another challenge for small towns is keeping up with the latest laws. He explained that oftentimes the state makes good laws but doesn't factor in the difficulty for smaller towns in meeting many of the mandates.

Coming up in 2026

TOWN, page 7



Andrew Alward



PAGE 6

Blandford.....6	Hilltowns2	Otis.....3	Schools & Youth.....7
Business Directory.....3	Middlefield.....3	Pittsfield2	Westfield10
Chester.....7	Northampton3	Public Notices.....8	Williamstown8
Classifieds.....9	Opinion.....4, 5	Puzzle Page8	Worthington.....10



HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Construction is shown on Station 31 in June 1911.



Submitted photos Car 162 is shown on its first trip to Huntington on Aug. 15, 1917.

Hilltown Hikers hold group hike along trolley line

HUNTINGTON – Western Mass Hilltown Hikers will hold a group hike on Saturday, Dec. 27 at 10 a.m. along the Huckleberry Trolley Line. They will meet in the parking lot of Stanton Hall, 24 Russell Road. This is a moderate three miles in and back hike on old trolley bed including easy street walking and includes viewing of the exclusive trolley research in Stanton Hall. The weather will determine how much

woods walking the group does on the old trolley bed. This historic trolley line was dubbed “The Three Million Dollar Failure” and is located in the center of Huntington, which is the most historic Huckleberry Trolley locations. Participants will learn about the line that ran from Lee to Huntington and view the collection of construction photos and maps that they have compiled from the last ten years of research.

The Massachusetts Legislature in a special act of 1910 authorized the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, which they opposed, to build a transportation route through the towns of Huntington, Blandford, Otis, Becket and Lee. The Western Massachusetts Contracting Company was awarded the construction contract and work began in East Lee in the spring of 1910. Despite problems from the rolling

terrain, small streams, ponds and dense woods progress was rapid at first and the entire line was built by November 1915. It was 12.54 miles long and completely over budget. The line operated until 1918. The exclusive Huckleberry Trolley Collection of postcards, construction photos and more will be on display for this event. Participants will enjoy hot cocoa and cookies too. People should register

per car load by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com under the events tab. Maps and bottled water is provided. Well behaved dogs are allowed. Event is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$15. Tees, patches and more are for sale by donation at the event. More details including a blog are available by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com. People may email westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com or call/text 413-302-0312 if

they have any questions. Always be prepared for rocks, mud and roots and bring trekking poles. People, who want to hike every weekend year round, may become a Hilltown Hiker member. They will get access to private Messenger Group Text with hike and event announcements that are member exclusive events. They may sign up under membership by visiting www.hilltownhikers.com.

HILLTOWNS

Clean Water Trust's announces grant awards

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's Board of Trustees approved \$104,199,464 in new low-interest loans and grants at its meeting on Dec. 4. The Trust, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, helps communities build or replace water infrastructure that enhances ground and surface water resources, ensures the safety of drinking water, protects public health and develops resilient communities. It accomplishes these objectives by providing low-interest loans and grants to cities, towns and water utilities through

the Massachusetts State Revolving Funds. The SRF programs are partnerships between the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. SRFs function like an environmental infrastructure bank by financing water infrastructure projects in cities and towns across the Commonwealth. Receiving Asset Management Planning Grants are Cheshire \$66,312, Great Barrington \$147,072 and Williamstown \$68,640. For more information on the different loan programs, people may visit the SRF Programs page

and their Loan Forgiveness Program page. For information on past meetings or to find project descriptions, people may visit the Board of Trustees Meeting Information page. For information on how to apply for an SRF loan, people may visit Mass DEP's State Revolving Fund Applications and Forms page. Since its establishment in 1989, the Trust has loaned nearly \$9.6 billion to improve and maintain the quality of water in the Commonwealth. An estimated 97% of Massachusetts' residents have benefited from the financial assistance of the Trust.

PITTSFIELD

Voting for Winter Window-land Decorating Contest begins

PITTSFIELD – Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. announces voting for their Winter Window-land Decorating Contest will be open now through Saturday, Dec. 27. First floor level locations in downtown Pittsfield were invited to compete for the title of “Best Decorated Windows for the Holidays” in this free contest sponsored by RSI Signs and Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. Those who signed up as participating locations will be eligible to be voted upon. No write-ins are allowed. Participating locations are: Berkshire Carousel, 50 Center St.; Berkshire County Arc, 700 North

St.; Berkshire Graphics Inc., 239 Wahconah St.; Brotherhood Building, 141 North St.; Deidre's Special Day, 2 South St., Suite 100; FaceFrame Collective, 437 North St.; Local Appliance, 419 North St.; Nene's Deco, 144 South St.; Peace Train Tees, 2 South St., Suite 150; Solarium, 46 West St.; Steven Valenti's Clothing, 157 North St.; This & That Sports, 128 Fenn St. and Thistle 'n Thorn Floral, 393 North St. Online voting will be conducted now through Dec. 27 via a Google Form at bit.ly/VOTEWinterWindowland25. People will be able to vote for their top three favorites to win the

title of “Best Decorated Windows for the Holidays.” Only once ballot will be counted per person. RSI Signs will offer a \$500 Store Credit as the prize for the winner of the “Best Decorated Windows for the Holidays.” For more information, people may call Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. at 413-443-6501. Since 1983, Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. has been the recognized leader, facilitator, and principal advocate for downtown. DPI is a membership organization who have joined forces to increase economic activity by promoting downtown as a great place to live, work and play.

WE CARRY A WIDE VARIETY OF FROZEN TURKEYS, TURKEY BREAST, DUCKS, GEESE, CORNISH HENS AS WELL AS FRESH HAMS & RED MEAT ROASTS FOR YOUR HOLIDAY NEEDS!

<p>USDA INSP. FRESH STORE MADE PORK CROWN ROAST \$2⁸⁸ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS HOLIDAY ROAST PORK LOIN STORE MADE STUFFED WITH HAM, CHEESE, PEPPERS, ONIONS, SPICES..... \$4⁴⁹ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH PORK WHOLE HAM..... \$1⁹⁹ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. HILLSHIRE FARMS POLSKA KIELBASA TURKEY 13 OZ or REGULAR 14 OZ \$2⁹⁹ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. BONELESS KAYEM BUDABALL WHOLE SMOKED PIT HAM \$3⁶⁶ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN HAM PORTION BUTT or SHANK..... \$1⁵⁵ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. BUDBALL OLD TYME SKINLESS & SHANKLESS HARDWOOD SMOKED HAM..... \$2⁶⁶ lb</p>	<p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TENDERLOIN CUT FREE \$13⁹⁹ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN RIB EYE or STANDING ROAST \$12⁷⁷ lb WHOLE OR HALF</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP SIRLOIN SPOON ROAST \$7⁷⁷ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LEG LAMB \$6⁶⁹ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN IMPORTED LAMB RACKS \$14⁹⁹ lb</p>	<p>USDA INSP. FROZEN TURKEY BREAST \$1⁶⁹ lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN WHOLE GOOSE \$12⁹⁹ lb</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-weight: bold;">HOLIDAY APPETIZERS</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN CHEFS TOGETHER PIGS IN A BLANKET 24 PC BOX... \$3⁹⁹ ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN PARMESAN MINI SPRING ROLLS 8 PAK..... \$3⁹⁹ ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN BACON WRAPPED SHRIMP 16.5 OZ BOX..... \$7⁹⁹ ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 21/25 CT 2 LB BAG \$16⁹⁹ ea</p>
--	---	--

MERRY CHRISTMAS & Happy Holidays! Gift Cards Available!

90 Meat Outlet 90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com

HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4
Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3

We reserve the right to limit quantities.

SALE DATES: 12/18/25-12/24/25 • CLOSED 12/25 BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE

HELP WANTED

ADVERTISING SALES

- Do you want to work in your community helping local businesses connect with their customers?
- Do you want a career supporting local journalism, which tells the unique stories of our communities?
- If so, then join our team! Turley Publications is looking for an outgoing, energetic person interested in selling advertising for our community newspapers. The right candidate will assume an established territory with a portfolio of customers.

You must be a self-starter with excellent communication and organizational skills. Basic computer skills are required. Previous print sales experience is preferred but we will train the right candidate.

Turley Publications, a locally owned family business, offers a competitive commission structure, 401k, and health plan.

Send resume & cover letter to:
Jamie Joslyn
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069
Email: jamie@turley.com

Turley Publications, Inc.

MIDDLEFIELD

COA holds Christmas party and luncheon

MIDDLEFIELD – The Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, offers take out or dine in luncheon and Christmas party on Wednesday, Dec. 24.

Menu choice is salmon Florentine or honey ham, mashed potatoes, cabbage and fennel, glazed carrots and apple pie. Senior should bring a \$10 gift to exchange.

NORTHAMPTON

Cooley Dickinson Hospital offers 3T MRI

NORTHAMPTON – Cooley Dickinson Hospital, a member of Mass General Brigham, has significantly upgraded its magnetic resonance imaging technology and is now offering 3T MRI in its Amherst location at 170 University Drive.

The new MRI features superior image quality and higher resolution images and has a wide bore to enhance patient comfort. The technology produces exceptionally detailed and clear images of the brain, spine, soft tissues, nerves, blood vessels and can be a valuable asset in managing conditions such as brain injuries, soft tissue injuries and prostate disease.

“We are delighted to bring this advanced technology to the Western Massachusetts community,” says Michele Kearsley, Director of Imaging Services at Cooley Dickinson Hospital. “It is an important asset to our expert clinicians in treating and managing injuries and illness and enables us to continue providing the very best care to our patients and their families.”

For more information,

people may visit <https://www.cooleydickinson.org/programs-services/radiology-imaging/>

The MRI machine itself weighs more than eight tons, which is equivalent to the size of a Tyrannosaurs Rx or a yellow school bus. The power of the magnet is 60,000 times stronger than the Earth’s magnetic field. Once the magnet is installed, we use liquid nitrogen to sustain the magnetic field by cooling the MRI to a near absolute zero temperature of -452° F.

Cooley Dickinson Hospital (cooleydickinson.org) is a not-for-profit, acute care hospital that offers community based programs and services in Northampton. A member of the Mass General Brigham System, Cooley Dickinson has been advancing the health of people in the Pioneer Valley since 1886. The organization includes community-based primary care and specialty practices in Hampshire and Southern Franklin counties and a VNA & Hospice program that provides home health and hospice nursing and rehabilitation visits.

OTIS

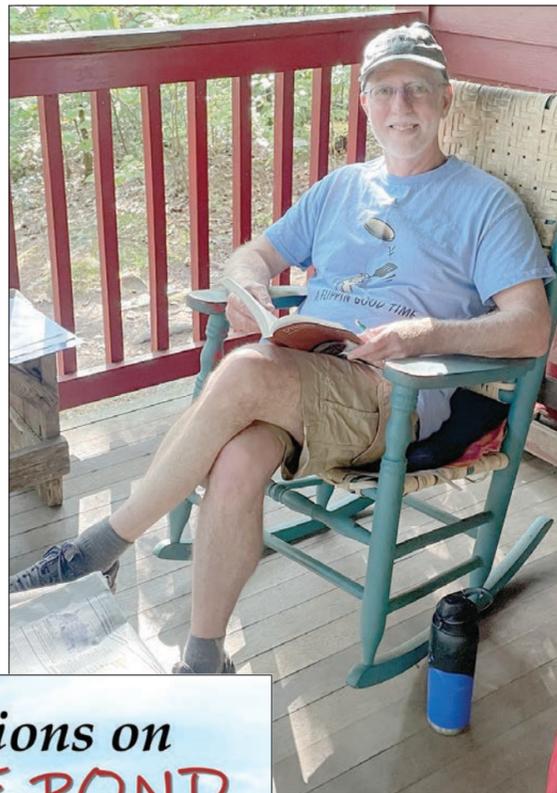
OHC presents author David Cohen

OTIS – The Otis Historical Commission and Otis Preservation Trust on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. present local author David Cohen discussing his book “Reflections on Goose Pond: Stories of a Berkshires Mountain Lake” via zoom.

Cohen will share information and stories about Goose Pond located in the town of Lee followed by a question and answer session. Admission is free but registration is required.

In “Reflections on Goose Pond: Stories of a Berkshire Mountain Lake,” Cohen describes geography and topography, area industry and cultural life and wildlife as he takes the reader on a journey through Goose Pond’s history.

Cohen shares the remote geological forces that produced Goose Pond, the



Upper Goose Pond, preserving the largest undeveloped lake in Massachusetts.

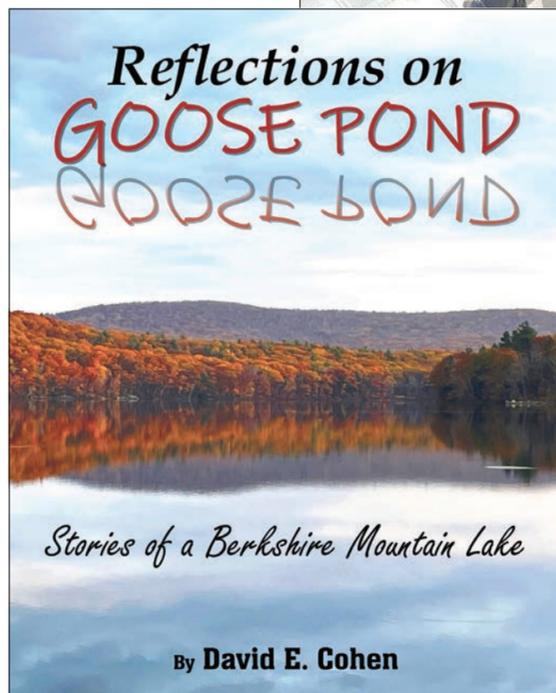
Through his colorful writing, Cohen reveals stories that will likely surprise even longtime Goose Pond residents, like that of an abandoned ski slope, a mysterious U.S. Navy operation, a sunken car, a legend of an Indian grave, the origins of an island pedestal and a stone throne.

Author Cohen was a cardiologist in New Jersey before practicing medicine in the Berkshires where he continues to practice. He has been coming to Goose Pond for over fifty years and now lives full time on the lake with his wife and dog. For additional information or to purchase the book, people may email david@berkshiresmountainbooks.com.

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

People may visit www.otispreservationtrust.com or www.townofotisma.com Otis Preservation Trust

www.otispreservationtrust.com. There is no charge to attend this event, but pre-registration is required. Donations are welcome.



Above, local author David Cohen will discuss his book “Reflections On Goose Pond: Stories of a Berkshires Mountain Lake” on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Inset, this is the cover of local author David Cohen’s book on Goose Pond.

Submitted photos

Lee paper making industry, Goose Pond’s contribution to hydroelectric power, the building of the pond’s dam and the stories behind the founding families of the pond’s original cabins. Trustees of Reservations established the Goose Pond Reservation and the National Park Service purchased

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.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

George PROPANE INC.
PROPANE GAS PLUMBING • HEATING
 (413) 268-8360
TOLL FREE 1-800-464-2053
 Family Owned & Operated
 3 Berkshire Trail West (Route 9), P.O. Box 102, Goshen, MA 01032
www.georgepropane.com

Paul’s Plumbing & Heating
238-0303
 PAUL GRAHAM
 Mass. License 23299

AQUA PUMPS WATER SYSTEMS
 Water Pumps • Sewer Pumps
 Water Conditioners
 46 Pitcher Street
 Montgomery, MA 01085
 Donald Washburn
 862-3301

Kirke R. Henshaw, Inc.
 Water Well Drilling, Water Pump Sales & Service
 Water Testing • System Evaluations
 Water System Repairs • Hydrofracture to Increase Flow
HENSHAW
 800-232-4725 • Fax 413-296-4565
Charles R. Henshaw
 130 Cummington Rd., W. Chesterfield, MA • 413-296-4725

FEED • PET SUPPLIES • CLOTHING • COAL
 WOOD PELLETS • WILD & CAGED BIRDSEED
 POOL SUPPLIES • MOTOR OILS • FENCING
 LAWN & GARDEN SUPPLIES • FERTILIZER
GATEWAY FARM & PET
 Poulin Grain • RED WING SHOES • Carhartt
 59 RUSSELL ROAD, HUNTINGTON, MA 01050
1-413-667-2279 M-F 8am-5pm
 Sat. 8am-4pm
 TARA GRENIER • PAUL GRENIER

DOWN TO EARTH EXCAVATING INC
 Highly Regarded Professionals: Complete Site Work, Septic Development and Repairs. Fully Insured.
413+667+5269
 Paul & Randy LaPointe, Owners Huntington, Mass.

Dale’s Structural & Carpentry
 Home Improvement • Additions • Restorations • Repairs
 Post & Beam Repairs
 Sagging Floors - Beams - Columns
 Sill Timbers - Termite Damage
 Foundation Repairs - Piers & Footings
 Chimney Rebuilds
 FULLY LICENSED & INSURED
 Huntington, MA • 413-667-3149
dalesstructuralandcarpentry.com

Jeff’s Oil Burner Service
 • Tune Ups
 • Installations
 • Oil Tanks
 Huntington, Massachusetts
 Office 413.667.0245
 Cell 413.530.7037
jeffsoilburnerservice@hotmail.com

Contact
Wendy Delcamp
TO ADVERTISE AT
413-283-8393
 or email:
wdelcamp@turley.com

ARCHITECT
JEFFREY SCOTT PENN
 77 Worthington Road, Huntington, MA 01050
 Tel. 413-531-1868
 Fax. 413-667-3082
 Email: jpsped@verizon.net
 new construction, renovation,
 historic preservation

EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES
 New Year’s will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in **TURLEY PUBLICATIONS** the week of Dec. 29, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026:
Friday, December 26 at 2 PM for January 1 issue
 • Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times
 • Agawam Advertiser News
Monday, December 29 at 2 PM for January 1 issue
 • Sentinel • The Journal Register
 • Ware River News • Barre Gazette
Tuesday, December 30 at 2 PM for January 2 issue
 • Quaboag Current • Town Reminder
 • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register
TURLEY PUBLICATIONS
 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069
 413-283-8393 • www.turley.com

GUEST COLUMN



About remarrying and benefits from an ex-spouse

Dear Rusty:

I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits?

Signed: Starting Over

Dear Starting Over:

With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former

spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later after your former spouse dies. Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your Full Retirement Age, the monthly payment amount would be reduced, all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced.

Note too, that if you plan to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly for 2025 it is \$23,400 and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And, as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the "earnings test" into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your Full Retirement Age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security's Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here:

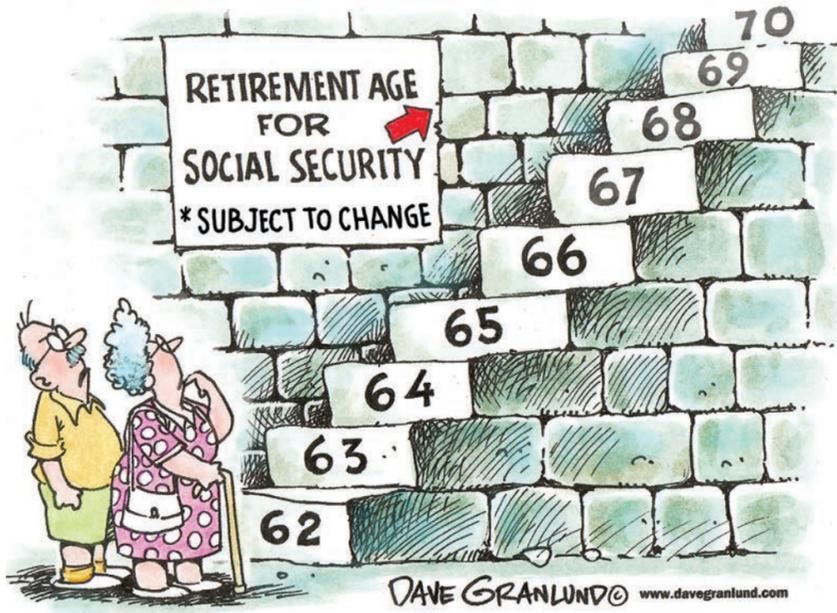
https://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html

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

Corrections policy

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

OPINION



GUEST COLUMN

Two holiday plants suited for gift giving

Are you in need of a plant for a hostess gift this holiday season but poinsettias aren't your cup of tea? Look no further! I will give you my top two non-poinsettia picks, and share my experiences growing these plants.

Hopefully you will find the perfect gift for someone on your list.

Florist Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*) is a delightful indoor plant that flowers during the winter months and is available at local nurseries and box stores. Its quarter-sized blooms in red, pink and white are unique in that the petals are bent back and held above pretty, heart-shaped, sil-

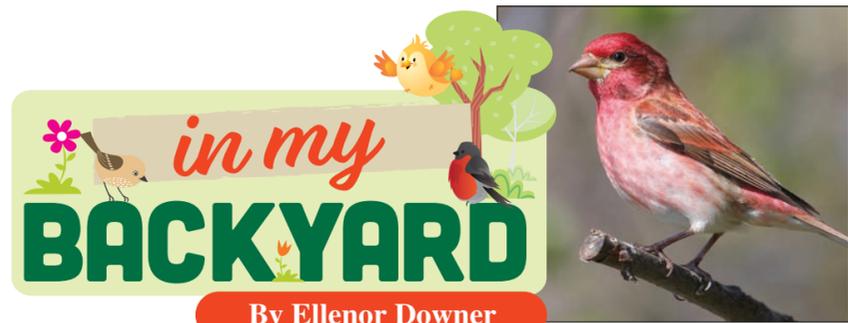
ver-margined leaves. There are varying types available with fancy flowers and intricately patterned foliage. The cyclamen plant is tuberous and unfortunately is best propagated by seed or by division of its fibrous roots. Usually this task is left to the experts who are best able to deal with erratic germination and roots that are susceptible to rot.

A few years back I became the owner of my very first cyclamen (thanks, Mom!). I had a little trouble after awhile.

During the spring its leaves yellowed and fell off so I threw it out. Little did I know that leaf loss was supposed to happen! It was going dormant.

With the cyclamen's bloom time during the winter, it has a period of dormancy mid spring through the end of summer when its leaves will yellow and shed and it will demand next to no water. This time frame is opposite of what we are used to with our perennial flowers that bloom during the summer and go dormant during the winter.

GARDEN, page 5



Purple finch

An Oakham resident saw a purple finch in her yard recently.

The purple finch is about six inches long. It has a sturdy body, short tail and a conical bill designed to crack seed. The male has raspberry red covering its head, chest and back. The color fades into a lighter pink tone on the belly. The wings and tail are brown with red highlights. The female has no red coloring and is brown and white with heavy streaking. It has a white eyebrow stripe.

The purple finch and house finch are often confused. The purple finch as a more uniform raspberry color and the house finch is more orange red color. The house finches color is limited to the head and upper chest. The purple finch also has notch at the base of its tail and is larger.

Purple finches breed

primarily in Canada and the northeastern United States including New England and the Great Lakes region. The purple finch is the state bird of New Hampshire.

A typical clutch consists of four or five pale blue eggs with small dark speckles. The female incubates the eggs for about 12-14 days while the male provides food. Once hatched, both parents feed the nestlings a mixture of regurgitated seeds and insects to ensure proper nutrition. The fledglings leave the nest roughly two weeks after hatching, though parents continue feeding and protecting them for another week or two.

They are fond of black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, and millet offered in tube or platform feeders. In summer they supplement their diet with insects and caterpillars as well as blackberries and cherries.

Birds during snow storm

A Brimfield resident emailed, "During the recent snow storm (Tuesday, Dec. 2) there were 30 plus dark-eyed juncos in the yard and one white-throated sparrow.

Bird bath visitors

The Brimfield resident said he went looking for his bird bath heater and could not find it.

He said, "Eventually I did find it, in the bird bath. It wasn't connected and grass had grown over the cord so I couldn't see it, but dug around and eventually found the cord, got it plugged in and now the bath isn't freezing."

He has a trail camera near the bird bath. Lots of birds are using the bird bath, mostly to get a drink. Birds coming to the bird bath include blue jay, Carolina wren, cardinal, cedar wax-

BACKYARD, page 5

Country Journal welcomes Election letters to the editor

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

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

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

Campaign news

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

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

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

Country Journal TEAM



EDITOR
Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

The Country Journal (USPS 483-550) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069.



@ Country Journal



countryjournal.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

Turley Publications, Inc.

www.turley.com

Turley Publications, Inc. cannot assume liability for the loss of photographs or other materials submitted for publication. Materials will not be returned except upon specific request when submitted.

ISSN NO. 0747-2471

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

Mail letter to Country Journal, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or mail your letter to: countryjournal@turley.com.



PHONE

413.283.8393

Fax: 413.283.7017

Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL

Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor

Ellenor Downer
countryjournal@turley.com

Subscriptions
www.turley.com

\$31 per year pre-paid
(\$36 out of state)
Newsstand: \$.75 per copy

WEB

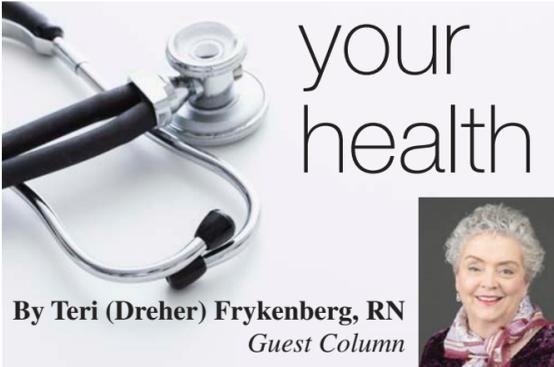
www.countryjournal.turley.com

@ Country Journal

The Country Journal is published by Turley Publications, Inc. • www.turley.com

OPINION

A different kind of concierge medicine



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

The rise of concierge medicine shows no signs of slowing down. Frustrated with long wait times for appointments, waiting room delays and only brief conversations with their doctor, those who can afford it are shelling out hundreds of dollars each month for faster care and attention, 24-hour access and personalized health programs.

It's understandable that, in our fractured health-care system, people would start looking for alternatives. There are some drawbacks to concierge care, however.

Many don't accept insurance, in order to keep their own costs low. You will still need to pay for insurance in case a serious illness or injury requires hospitaliza-

tion or a specialist. And not all concierge docs have hospital privileges, which may complicate care coordination – especially important for someone with multiple chronic illnesses.

It's that coordination, or "wraparound care," that sets private patient advocates apart from concierge doctors. Both offer concierge-style service, but a patient advocate goes above and beyond. When you pay for a patient advocate, you can expect them to be there when you need them, anticipate your needs, cut through red tape and run interference with hospitals and insurance companies.

Here are some scenarios where I think the concierge services of a nurse patient

advocate may exceed those of concierge doctors.

When an aging loved one is on their own: Very often, patient advocates are hired by family members trying to care for an elder who lives far away and may not have family close by. We are their boots on the ground, their eyes and ears, and their go-between with the medical professions caring for their loved one.

When you feel the hospital medical staff isn't hearing you: It's not uncommon for patients and patients' families to feel like their concerns are being overlooked or, worse, dismissed. A medically trained patient advocate speaks the language and can build bridges, mediate conflict and dial back the drama.

When your insurance claim is denied: Insurance documents can be wildly confusing. It helps to have someone on your side who can read through the mumbo-jumbo and explain whether an appeal may be successful. A patient advocate can also help prepare an appeal.

When a "simple" medical procedure turns into a nightmare: One of my clients was a 75-year-old gentleman who developed complications after a procedure. Unfortunately, the

hospital and his physicians didn't meet the standard of care, leading him to have a stroke, internal bleeding, dehydration and a host of problems. He became delusional after days in the hospital and was given antipsychotic drugs. I was able to intervene with the care team, and his condition improved.

When a patient isn't ready for discharge: Hospitals very often want to get chronically ill patients out of their beds and into a nursing facility. Sometimes this is the right thing to do, but sometimes it isn't. A nurse patient advocate can evaluate a patient and work with the care team to make sure it's the proper course, and then help with the transition.

When a college student with a medical condition is away from home: It's unlikely that the typical 18- or 19-year-old has the maturity to advocate for themselves in a medical crisis. Parents may not be there to give their student the personal attention they may need to understand their treatment, speak with medical staff and schedule tests and appointments. A patient advocate in the student's location can help.

When there's no one to go with you to a doctor



appointment: Doctor appointments these days can feel rushed, and often patients are confused about what they're supposed to do next, what medications are changing and what prescriptions need to be filled. Anyone can accompany you to an appointment to take notes, but if you're on your own, a patient advocate can explain the details.

The most important aspect of a patient advocate's "concierge service" is that they work for the patient, their client – not the hospital, not the insurance company. If you need help, find a board-certified patient advocate in your area by visiting

Greater National Advocates (gnaow.org) or the National Association of Healthcare Advocacy (nahac.com).

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to *Turley Newspaper* readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

GARDEN

from page 4

In late August, we can begin watering again and leaves will sprout anew before the blooming cycle begins during the fall.

Another favorite holiday plant by the name of Paperwhites start out as a bulb. The bulbs are available now by mail and from local nurseries and garden centers.

Sometimes you can "fill a bag" with the exact number you want, which is really neat. Upon inspection of the bulb and the picture on the label, you'll note that Paperwhites look very much like our outdoor daffodils.

Paperwhites are cousins to these spring harbingers and bloom easily inside with little more than light, something to anchor the developing roots (soil or rocks) and water to get them growing. They don't need to go through a period of cold in order to bloom like outdoor narcissus do.

In just about four weeks after planting you'll be delighted with flowers galore!

Decide for yourself if you like the fragrance or you find it a little overpowering. Prevent leaves and stems from stretching by placing your container in a cool spot in your home

during the night and enjoy the flowers in your living spaces during the day.

After flowering is done, throw the bulbs out free of guilt; they won't bloom again consistently. One year you may remember that I did try to regrow the bulbs by allowing them to dry out within the container I had first grown them in. Of the four bulbs, two had life left in them a year later.

I watered and waited and leaves did grow, but no flowers ever came. I ended up chalking it up to an experience and starting over with new bulbs the following winter.

Have fun experimenting with these plants or any number of beauties worthy of a good home for the holidays.

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

BACKYARD

from page 4

wing (six), chickadee, goldfinch, mourning dove, robin (three), titmouse and white-throated sparrow.

He said, "Robins took a bath but when it was warmer, temperature in the upper 40s. Junco are the only cold weather bathers." Mammals seen at the bird bath are opossum, raccoon, mouse at least two and a mole.

He thinks the tub he uses for the bird bath has a leak because the water level goes down and he has to refill it ever couple of day. He said, "The local pond are now frozen. We did a few trips around the area



and never saw any migrating ducks, just mallards and Canada geese.

Helping birds

Birds are attracted to water during winter months. They do not bath when temperatures are below freezing, but they do take a drink. A source of unfrozen water will attract birds.

Providing wild birds with clean drinking water is helpful. However, providing a roomy bathing area that stays thawed even in severely-cold weather can be harmful in some cases. Before heating devices kept birdbaths ice free, birds could bathe in naturally-melted water and be

able to fly off without their feathers freezing. According to the blog Cool Green Science-Stories of The Nature Conservancy, birds bathing while air temperatures are frigid risk harm due to frozen feathers: <https://blog.nature.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

The article suggests modifying heated birdbaths so that birds can safely drink, but not bathe. A metal heating element that keeps a small section of the birdbath thawed works well. People, who have bird feeders or simple feeding stations may add shallow unbreakable container around the area.

Yes, it can be labor-intensive, but they can easily pour water into them (hot water when it's below freezing) and provide fresh water for at least a short period of time. As a source of drinking water, the containers can be filled with pebbles that will form small pockets of water where birds can get a drink of water.

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

Bicentennial Park shines with lights and garlands

BLANDFORD – In shades of yesteryear, a small but stalwart band of Blandfordites gathered Thursday afternoon to help decorate Bicentennial Park.

Jackie Coury, George Reichert and Deb Brodie all worked to illuminate the fence while listening to “Old Traditional Holiday

music,” said Coury. Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera and Administrative Assistant Joann Martin provided the wreath to cap off the center.

At one time, well over 50 years ago, the town had a Beautification Committee. No one has served in this capacity in a long time. But

the effort to maintain a good look in the center of town is credit and credible for Blandford.

“We didn’t have a lot of volunteers but totally understandable given it was crazy,” Coury said. It was a two-hour-long project, and “was well worth the effort,” she added.



Winter hardy helpers hung the garlands and lights at Bicentennial Park to brighten up the center of town, according to Jackie Coury, who organized the work party with George Reichert. Deb Brodie assisted. Submitted photo



Blandford Council on Aging hosts holiday luncheon

BLANDFORD – Chef supreme Joann Martin again created menu magic with the annual Council on Aging Holiday Luncheon.

Servers Susan Bloomrose, Deborah Lundgren, Judith MacKinnon along with COA Director

Margit Mikuski dished plates of turkey tetrazzini with gravy on noodles. Holiday eggnog, bloody Mary deviled eggs, Caesar salad, followed by a peppermint brownie trifle accompanied the meal.

Diners were dressed in their holiday best.

Far left, Mary Mangini, seated and Pam Dirschka wear their holiday finery for the Council on Aging holiday luncheon. Left, Serving Steve Hart are, from left, Susan Bloomrose, Judith MacKinnon, Deborah Lundgren and COA Director Margit Mikuski. Turley Publications photos by Mary Kronholm

Historical Society sang carols at annual tree lighting

BLANDFORD – On Sunday, Dec. 7 Blandford Historical Society held car-

oling and the annual tree lighting of the pine tree in front of their building. They

sang many holiday favorites and served hot chocolate and homemade cookies.



Shown caroling are from left, Blandford Historical Society President Chips Norcross, Pamela Dirschka, Colette and T.J. Cousineau and Patrick Stearns and Melissa Hamm.



Shown caroling by the Blandford Historical Society are from left, Chuck Rosa Benson, Blandford Historical Society President Chips Norcross, Pamela Dirschka and Colette and T.J. Cousineau. Submitted photos



Shown at the annual tree lighting are Terri Garfield, foreground with song book; Cara Letendre; Mary Mangini; Charlotte and Violet Letendre and Judith and Neal MacKinnon.

Historical Society holds Knox cannon salute and bonfire

BLANDFORD – On Sunday, Jan 11 from 3:30-5 p.m. at the Blandford Fairgrounds, 10 North St., the Blandford Historical Society will hold a 250th anniversary Knox cannon salute and bonfire celebration.

250 years ago on this day, Blandford townspeople greeted General Henry Knox and his “Noble Train of Artillery” on their historic journey as they pulled the cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston.

The Historical Society will have live animals. “General Henry Knox” will ride a horse from Russell that

participates in veteran ceremonies and Solomon Brown will have a yoke of oxen from a father and son operation called Hickory Hollow Steers in Belchertown. The cannoners, who are with Cranes Continental Artillery based south of Worcester, will be firing a replica of a Revolutionary War cannon built in 1935.

Afterwards, there’s a slideshow indoors at Blandford Historical Society around the corner for those that who want to stop in and meet locals, who participated in an actual 300-mile reenactment 50 years ago. This is a 30-minute account

of Knox’s journey through Blandford told by a colorful cast of characters in their own words including General Knox, locals, and citizen Solomon Brown who stepped in with his oxen to help and into history. The event is free along with free doughnuts from Blandford Country Store, hot chocolate and cider.

In the event of bad weather, the Historical Society will cancel and re-schedule for a later date. People should visit their website at www.blandford-historical-society.org the morning of the event.

Town to hold another STM Dec. 19

BLANDFORD – The Special Town Meeting for Friday, Dec. 19 at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall will ask voters to transfer \$370,000 from Free Cash.

Free Cash has been certified by the Department of Revenue at \$1,260,213. According to Town Administrator Cristina Ferrera, there was

a duplication of amounts to be raised and appropriated on the budget presented and voted on at the Annual Town Meeting in June, increasing the Free Cash in excess of a million dollars.

The Tax Classification Hearing has had to be postponed from Dec. 12 until immediately following the Special Town Meeting

Friday because of the error. By taking the \$370,000 from Free Cash the error will be corrected and the Tax Classification hearing can proceed.

The amount left in Free Cash will be \$656,213 and a tax rate can be established for the town pending certification by DOR.

Congregational church lists services

BLANDFORD – Regular Church service at the First Congregational Church of Blandford is set for 10 a.m. on Sunday Dec. 21 at 10 a.m.

Later that day at 4

p.m. there will be Carols by Candlelight followed by desserts down stairs in the Chapel’s Dining Room.

Christmas Day service will be at 7 a.m. followed by breakfast at the

Parsonage.

Regular service returns Sunday, Dec. 28 at 10 a.m. All services are at the Brown Chapel of the First Congregational Church of Blandford on Main Street.

Organizer announces pancake breakfast

BLANDFORD – Annual Fire Department Association pancake breakfast organizer Pat Lombardo provided the significant details for the Saturday, Dec. 5 event.

He adjusted the attendance to over 115 people. “The biggest and most successful breakfast yet,” he said. The volunteers in the

kitchen cooked up 30 pounds of bacon, and 20 pounds of breakfast sausage to go with all the pancakes flipped.

Diners also consumed five gallons of orange juice, three gallons of apple cider and an unknown number of gallons of coffee and hot chocolate. There were four gallons of maple syrup drizzled on the flapjacks.

And of course, there was a visit with Santa and an array of raffle items. The benefit to the Fire Department Association was over \$3,000. Lombardo reminds all that next year will be the tenth year of the pancake breakfast and plans are already taking shape.

LIBRARY

from page 1

This was the third largest attendance of registered voters at any town meeting in recent history.

The STM that considered the vote for the morato-

rium for all things solar saw a turnout of 169 registered voters and the STM calling for funding for the Energy Projects Siting Committee to have funds for legal counsel,

engineers etc. drew 108 registered voters.

Select Board Chair Cara Letendre and members T.J. Cousineau and Jackie Coury attended.

REGION

Gas price decreases two cents

WESTWOOD — Gasoline prices across the Northeast are falling as the winter trend of less demand and more supply comes into focus.

Last week, gasoline demand fell to a softer-than-expected 8.3 million barrels a day, according to the Energy Information Administration. That's a decline of 400,000 barrels a day from the prior week and contributed to a sizable jump in inventories, which grew by 4.5 million barrels, the EIA reported.

The build in inventories came even as gasoline production dipped slightly from 9.37 to 9.13 million barrels a day and global demand for American refined products continues to soar. The EIA reported gasoline exports last week rose to the highest level since 2018, averaging 1.25 million barrels a day, up from 1.08 million barrels a day the week before. Exports have eclipsed one million barrels a day six times over the past eight weeks and have provided a healthy market for U.S. refiners as domestic demand weakens.

"Ultimately, more sup-

ply and less demand is driving down pump prices," said Mark Schieldrop, senior spokesperson for AAA Northeast. "Nationally, the average price for a gallon of regular unleaded has fallen below \$3 for the first time since February of 2021."

The average gas price in Massachusetts is down two cents from last week (\$3.03), averaging \$3.01 per gallon. Today's price is up a penny from a month ago (\$3) and down two cents from this day last year (\$3.03). Massachusetts's average gas price is six cents higher than the national average.

AAA Northeast's Dec. 8 survey of fuel prices found the current national average down five cents from last week (\$3), averaging \$2.95 per gallon. Today's

national average price is 12 cents lower than a month ago (\$3.07) and six cents lower than this day last year (\$3.01).

Today, Oklahoma and Colorado have the lowest prices in the nation at \$2.36 and \$2.47, respectively. California and Hawaii hold the highest prices in the nation this week at \$4.46 and \$4.44 respectively. Massachusetts holds the 15th place on the list of highest gas prices in the nation.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.8 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, financial and auto-related services.



SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Berkshire Youth Leadership Program accepting applications

PITTSFIELD — 1Berkshire's Berkshire Youth Leadership Program is accepting applications.

The 1Berkshire Youth Leadership Program, open to all current sophomores in the Berkshires, selects a cohort of up to 30 motivated students from all backgrounds for this ten-month experience that will allow them to explore the regional economy and develop their leadership skills.

Once selected, students will begin the program with a three-day, three-night retreat in June near the end of their sophomore year. At the retreat, students will meet for the first time, begin to build connections and learn about their individual leadership styles.

Over the following ten months, students will reconvene for eight full-day sessions, held at various locations across the Berkshires or virtually, in the case of severe weather conditions. During these sessions, students will meet with business leaders and dynamic community members to learn about a sector of the

regional economy, including but not limited to advanced manufacturing, food and agriculture, healthcare and wellness, outdoor recreation, the creative economy and hospitality and tourism.

Students will develop leadership traits through activities within the sessions, and as a class, will develop and execute a collective impact project that will enhance life in the Berkshires. Kevin Pink, Deputy Director of Economic Development at 1Berkshire and Program Coordinator of the Youth Leadership Program, noted, "The Youth Leadership program provides an amazing opportunity for students to grow as individuals and as members of a community spanning the Berkshires." He added "The sessions allow students to explore key segments of our regional economy, gaining a deep understanding of career opportunities available to them in the Berkshires and working together on a project that makes a positive impact in the place they call home."

This program is made

possible through the ongoing financial support of Berkshire Bank, Greylock Federal Credit Union, Camp Becket Chimney Corners, NBT Bank, Berkshire Agricultural Ventures and others. The 1Berkshire Youth Leadership Program is coordinated by 1Berkshire with the dynamic support of the volunteer Youth Leadership Program Steering

Committee, composed of professionals from across the region who commit their time and expertise to develop and facilitate the entire program.

Until the Feb. 13 deadline, sophomores from any school in the Berkshires and equivalent-aged home-schooled students, may submit an application for the program. They may email economicdev@1berkshire.com with any questions.

1Berkshire is a county-wide marketing and economic development organization that works to simultaneously preserve, position and promote Berkshire County's profound sense of place.

CHESTER

TOWN

from page 1

will be deciding what to do with the old elementary school, located across from Town Hall. Selling the property passed in a vote by the townspeople last month. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is working with the Select Board on a Request for Proposals, which was created to be intentionally broad so that buyers could bid on a range of uses for

the property's purchase such as turning it into housing or developing a commercial purpose for the space. Once the project goes out to bid, they will invite potential bidders to tour the building.

Another focus for Alward this year is to update town policies and work with departments that wish to propose new bylaws at the annual town meeting. Alward

is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and his office is on the second floor of Town Hall. He can be reached by phone at 413-354-7750.

He is happy to take calls or visits from the public. And he is excited to "keep moving forward in his new job, and hopefully making Chester a better place, one day at a time."

Church lists Christmas services

CHESTER — The Chester Baptist Church, 14 Middlefield Road, welcomes the community to celebrate the birth of our Savior during the following events.

On Sunday, Dec. 21 at 9:45a.m. for a combined Sunday School program filled with Christmas hymns and selected scripture. Then, morning worship begins at

10:45a.m. with congregational hymns, special music and a message from God's Word. At noon everyone is invited to enjoy a delicious Christmas dinner.

On Wednesday, Dec. 24 the community is invited to celebrate Christmas Eve during a candlelight service from 6:30-7:30pm. The evening includes Christmas

scripture, music, poems and prayer. For more information, people may email Pastor Dan Herr at pastor@chesterbaptistchurch.org or call 413-668-7768.

Chester Baptist Church is located across from the Chester Town Hall. Nursery care is available for infants and toddlers during all services.

RAILWAY

from page 1

Representing the station/museum were the Chester Foundation President Dave Pierce and Treasurer Barbara Huntoon, among others.

Attending remotely was Tom Szerbik from Iron Mountain Iron and Equipment, LLC, a heavy equipment transport company from Vermont that the Railway Station had contracted to oversee the railroad car's move from its last location at Bernie's Diner in Chicopee to Chester. Also attending remotely was Chad Willard from Red's Towing, which has been subcontracted to tow the car from its current location to the museum.

In opening the meeting, Alward explained the purpose as working out the details necessary for the safe and efficient move of the dining car, tackling challenges, ensuring safety for all concerned and resulting in the least amount of disruption to town businesses and residents. The goal, Alward said, was to identify risks, delegate responsibilities and complete the move without incident and in compliance with all related regulations.

It was verified that Iron Mountain had obtained all of the necessary permits from the state for the earlier move

down Route 20, which happened on Nov. 25.

First up was Highway Superintendent Dazelle, who stated that he wanted the Foundation to know that the town of Chester really wants this to work out and supports the train station. Dazelle said he had 100% confidence in their ability to get the move done from years of working with Willard. Dazelle confirmed that the highway department will be there that day and close the road for the duration of the move. "I have full confidence in Red's," Dazelle reiterated.

Fire Chief Bolduc reported on his emergency planning thus far. Safety concerns have been tackled to address any contingencies that might arrive for residents on Prospect and Emory Streets, due to the road closure. Middlefield has agreed to send a fire truck down, which will be placed on the Prospect Street side of the underpass. Chester's Rescue Truck will be placed on that side to provide emergency medical treatment if needed. They will have a stretcher to bring anyone over the tracks, if needed, to the Hilltown Community Ambulance, which will be asked to set

up on the Main Street side of the event.

Pierce said that he had tried to work with CSX to obtain permission for emergency vehicles to go over the tracks, but to no avail, requiring the staging of resources on the Prospect/Emory Street side of things.

Initially, the group tried to schedule a date over the Christmas school break so as not to impede school buses, but Willard of Red's Towing scuttled that plan because he is short staffed on the holiday week. In the end, the group settled on Monday, Dec. 22. At issue when school is in session is a pre-school aged child who is picked up in the morning on Prospect Street and returned at 11:45 a.m. This led to the group deciding to use the morning to do their prep work on the rail car and starting the actual move around noon with completion expected before the high school buses reached the area mid-afternoon.

Willard plans to come out with his sweeper the day before to get any debris off the route. Dazelle said that he would make sure that the underpass was cleared of any snow. Willard also asked if a neighbor's yard might be utilized if needed and Huntoon

reported that the neighbor had graciously granted permission.

Police Chief Dubiel stated that she will have a police detail readied for that day. The Chester Foundation will go door to door and give written notice to the residents ahead of time.

The contractors reported that they have measured the angles and height of the underpass and say that the car will fit through it. Both will be there on Dec. 22. Huntoon reported that Reds, Iron Mountain and the museum all have insurance coverage for this event.

The tone of the meeting was very positive, cooperative and collaborative. After the meeting, Alward said that, while the meeting was posted and open to the public, it was not the town's role to answer questions or hold a press conference for this project. As such, the public could observe, but were not part of the discussion during the meeting. He explained that town resources were required to make this happen, but employees would work on a detail rate, which would be paid by the Foundation.

Huntoon of the Chester Foundation confirmed that fact after the meeting and

clarified that doing the move in two phases was always part of the plan. "It was never going to go all in one shot," Huntoon said. "It can't clear the underpass on the current trailer, which is too high. Iron Mountain has measured the underpass and trailer and decided to use Red's Towing."

She found the meeting helpful and productive. "We are really trying to make sure that all the i's are dotted, t's are crossed and everything is accounted for," Huntoon said. "We feel confident in the person we hired for this. And now we have a solid plan with the town."

Huntoon also confirmed that the Chester Foundation, station and railway museum are not town entities. They are a private, non-profit organization with their own 501(c)3. They will cover town costs, she said, countering some of the misinformation being shared across social media. "We are all doing everything we can to minimize any inconvenience on people."

Pierce explained the importance of the car to the museum. "This car is kind of an orphan because it has two holes cut in its side where it was attached to the restau-

rant," he explained. "The only other person who went to the showing wanted to scrap it. The city and many of the people of Chicopee were thrilled to see it being preserved."

Pierce said he believes the car was built in 1946 by Pullman Company as a coach. "It was bought by the New York Central Railroad and ran through AMTRAK, which retired it. It was brought to Westover Air Force Base by rail and trucked to Bernie's, just up the road." Pierce said he doesn't yet know if the car was converted into a dining car by the railroad or the restaurant.

"We plan to restore it to the New York Central lettering and number. NYC leased the former Boston & Albany RR through Chester, so there's a good chance it ran past the Chester Station," Pierce said.

The museum plans to restore it and rent it out as an event venue, as they do currently with the historic railway station. "It has a pretty large following of its own, among many who had enjoyed meals in it at Bernie's. I've been getting calls from as far away as Maryland on how it's doing."

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.

Country Journal
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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



FIVE ISLANDS

Georgetown, Maine
2 Bedrooms, 2 Bathroom
Washer/Dryer, Fully Equipped

- Walk to Five Islands Wharf and Ledgewood Preserve Beach
- Close to Reid State Park

\$1200/week

207-607-9333



PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Chester Special Permit Granting Authority Public Hearing
Special Permit Review for a Proposed Earth Removing Project located at 15 Kinnebrook Road, Chester, MA 01011
 The Planning Board of the Town of Chester, as the special permit granting authority, will hold a public hearing to conduct a special permit review for a proposed addition of a removal of earth and gravel operation located at 15 Kinnebrook Road,

Chester, MA.
 The public hearing will be held as follows:
Place: Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Council on Aging room
Date: January 28, 2026
Time: 5:00 pm
 The special permit review is for a proposed addition of a removal or earth and gravel blasting operation which includes crushing of ledge and trucking out dirt at 15 Kinnebrook Road. The purpose of this removal is to create a parking area.
 12/18, 12/25/2025

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

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

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

WILLIAMSTOWN

Clark Art Institute offers free thematic tours

WILLIAMSTOWN – This winter, the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., presents “In Focus,” a series of free thematic tours of its permanent collection with a Clark educator on select Sundays at 2 p.m.

On Sunday, Dec. 28 presents “The Color White” tour.

On Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026 the tour is “Mythology and Nudity in European Art.” The vibrant stories of ancient Greek and Roman mythology have inspired artists for centuries. In this session, examine mythological scenes in painting and sculptures from the sixteenth to the twentieth cen-

ture in the Clark’s collection. On Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026 the tour is “Stormy Weather.” The weather affects us every day, both physically and emotionally, influencing the moods and imagination.

Gallery admission is free. Capacity is limited. People may pick up a

ticket at the Clark Center admissions desk, available on a first-come, first-served basis. They should meet in the Museum Pavilion.

For more information, people may visit clarkart.edu/events. Admission to the Clark is free from January through March 2026.

Clark holds lecture on French artists

WILLIAMSTOWN – On Saturday, Jan. 10 at 11 am, the Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., celebrates the opening of its newest exhibition Shadow Visionaries: French Artists Against the Current, 1840-70 with a free lecture.

Offering a new take on mid-nineteenth-century French art, exhibition curator Anne Leonard, Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, introduces

the exhibition. The lecture takes place in the Manton Research Center auditorium. Although Realism is often seen as the dominant aesthetic of mid-nineteenth-century France, certain printmakers and photographers, called “shadow visionaries” for this project, embraced imagination, dreams, and allegory instead. Working against the grain, figures such as Victor Hugo, Charles Meryon, Rodolphe Bresdin-

and a roster of early French photographers-offered an alternate vision anchored in memory, fantasy, and longing. These artists recognized the potential of prints and photographs to construct a spiritual consciousness in the art of mid-1800s France.

Accessible seats are available; for information, people may call 413-458-0524. For more details, people may visit events.clarkart.edu.

Clark lists holiday hours

WILLIAMSTOWN – The Clark Art Institute, 225 South St., will be closed in observance of Christmas Eve on Wednesday, Dec. 24 and Christmas Day on Thursday, Dec. 25.

The Clark is open for regular hours on Wednesday, Dec. 31 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

In observance of New Year’s Day, the Clark is closed on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2026.

THIS WEEK’S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
 You have been looking for some new ways to make some extra money, and now might be the time to start putting your plan in motion. Good fortune awaits.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21
 Passion is on your mind this week, Taurus. Get together with a spouse or romantic partner and enjoy an evening with just the two of you. Embrace this chance to let the sparks fly.

GEMINI

May 22/June 21
 A gift would be a wonderful surprise for a loved one or friend this week, Gemini. Perhaps there is something that this person has had an eye on for some time now?

CANCER

June 22/July 22
 A group activity may bring new information and people into your life, Cancer. You might meet people from different backgrounds. Keep your eyes and ears open.

LEO

July 23/Aug 23
 Leo, you might be interested in expanding your horizons. You could think about attending a lecture or seeing a documentary on a particular subject. The education will enlighten.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22
 A long-awaited phone call or text from a person who has been out of touch for some time could come through this week. This may reopen the lines of communication between you both.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
 Libra, if finances have been on your mind, now is a good time to read the financial pages or study the stock reports. You also may want to sit down with a financial planner.

SCORPIO

Oct 24/Nov 22
 Scorpio, keep communication with business partners warm, open and honest. This will help you see your ideas come to fruition. It's always easier to catch flies with honey than vinegar.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
 Sagittarius, your tasks should go smoothly and quickly this week, particularly any paperwork you may have. Others are willing to help out if you need it.

CAPRICORN

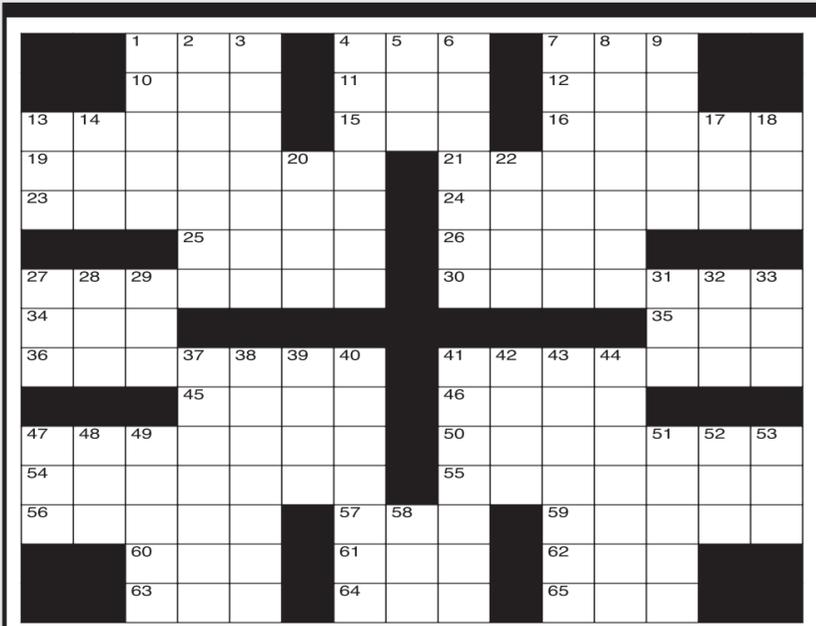
Dec 22/Jan 20
 Newfound communication heightens the relationship you have with a romantic partner this week. Feelings and memories are shared willingly, and you may learn something new.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
 A number of interesting visitors may come to your home this week, Aquarius. At least one may present some fascinating facts on a subject that is new to you. Enjoy the interaction.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
 Pisces, expect some interesting new neighbors to move in shortly. A friend will likely introduce you to these people, and a relationship could bloom.



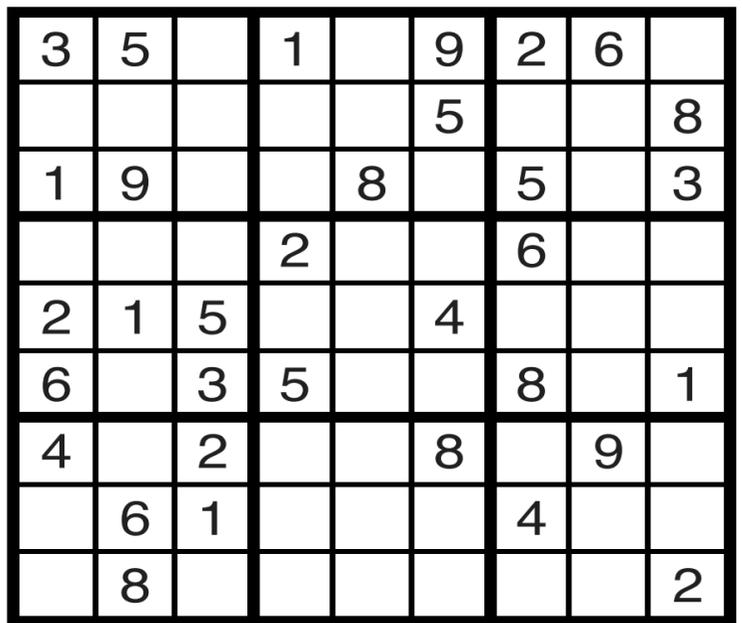
CLUES ACROSS

1. American automotive titan
4. Tire term
7. Two-year-old sheep
10. Indigenous people of Thailand
11. Anti-Soviet Cold War group
12. Actress de Armas
13. Not moving
15. Cool!
16. Plants of the arum family
19. Connected with touch
21. Pen stain
23. Monetary units
24. School kids' art project
25. Early Bell Canada executive
26. Sword
27. Hates
30. Fixed in one

- place
34. Pie ___ mode
35. Moved swiftly on foot
36. Carrier on vehicle
41. A path to get through
45. “Rule, Britannia” composer
46. Spiritual leader
47. Flowing
50. Respectful compliments
54. Cure
55. Soft, lightweight fabric
56. Building material
57. Japanese delicacy
59. A way to cause to be swollen
60. One and only
61. You might get one in summer
62. Wreath

63. Thus far
 64. They ___
 65. Employee reference number
- ### CLUES DOWN
1. Policemen (French)
 2. Toy dog
 3. Intestinal condition
 4. Muscular weaknesses
 5. Helps little firms
 6. Alphabetical lists
 7. Takes down
 8. Facilitates
 9. Ethnic people of Ethiopia
 13. Engine additive
 14. Explorers group
 17. Written account
 18. Consumed
 20. Opposite of first
 22. No (slang)
 27. Government lawyers
 28. NY Giants great

29. Small amount
31. A way to save for your future
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Head pain
38. Wildly popular sport
39. “Princess Diaries” actress Hathaway
40. Boat race
41. About fish
42. Nursemaid
43. Able to be marketed
44. Not as large
47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
48. Paddle
49. Oneness
51. Bitter chemical
52. Not around
53. Very fast airplane
58. Main tributary of the Rhine



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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10			11			12		
13	14			15		16		17 18
19			20		21 22			
23					24			
		25			26			
27	28	29			30		31 32 33	
34							35	
36		37 38 39 40		41 42 43 44				
		45			46			
47	48	49			50		51 52 53	
54					55			
56				57 58		59		
	60			61		62		
	63			64		65		

WESTFIELD AUTO PARTS INC

AUTO PARTS & SUPPLIES

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED MERCHANDISE FOR ALL MAKES & MODELS

WHOLESALE RETAIL

★ Complete Auto Machine Shop Service ★ Engine Rebuilding Of All Kinds
 ★ Authorized Caterpillar Hydraulic Hose Dealer ★ Hydraulic Hoses

Call “DALE” 8-12 BIRGE AVE., WESTFIELD

Dial 568-8944 or 568-1611 FAX # 568-1554

Now stocking Car Quest Filters made by WIX, Amalie Oil, Bailing Twine & Tractor Parts

Classifieds

12 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS | SERVING 50 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

COMMUNITY MARKETPLACE

Call us at 413.283.8393

FOR SALE

FIREWOOD

DRY FIREWOOD
Oak/maple, cut/split/delivered, \$300 a cord, \$285 for 2 or more. Edwin Wroblewski Logging, 413-824-0731. *Buying standing timber, paying good money.*

FIREWOOD

Fresh cut & split \$225.00
Seasoned cut & split \$325.00
All hardwood.
Tree length available

*Also have seasoned softwood for outdoor boilers (Cheap). Quality & volumes guaranteed!! New England Forest Products (413)477-0083

MORE HEAT LESS WOOD. Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX Outdoor Wood Furnace. EPA Certified. Titanium Stainless Steel. \$2K Tax Credit. Call (508)882-0178

WANTED

WANTED TO BUY

ALL ANTIQUES AND OLD STUFF WANTED.

BUYING Bottles, Crocks, Jugs, Pottery, Costume Jewelry, Toys, Games, coins, sterling, Glassware, Silver-plated items, watches, Musical instruments, typewriters, sewing machines, tools, radios, clocks, lanterns, lamps, kitchenware, cookware, knives, military, automotive, fire department, masonic, license plates, beer cans, barware, books, oil cans, advertising tins, hunting, fishing, signs, and more.

Donald Roy (860) 874-8396

WANTED

ALWAYS BUYING ALL ANTIQUES:

Musical instruments, guitars, horns, keyboards, vintage electronics, jewelry, coins, watches, military cameras, sports memorabilia, art, sterling, signs, automotive, hunting, advertising, radios, ham radio equipment, audio equipment, toys, one item or entire estate.

Call Paul 413-206-8688.

JUNK REMOVAL

A Call We Haul FAST REMOVAL

Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts. We load it & take it.

413-531-1936

CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

SERVICES



2*****A & B HOUSEHOLD REMOVAL SERVICE*****

Cellars, attics, garages cleaned, yard debris. Barns & sheds demolished. Swimming pools removed. Cheaper than dumpster fees and we do all the work. Lowest rates. Fully insured. (413)283-6512, cell (413)222-8868.

DRYWALL, PAINTING AND CEILINGING, plaster repair. Drywall hanging. Taping & complete finishing. All ceiling textures. Fully insured. Jason at Great Walls. (413)563-0487

SERVICES

ELECTRICIAN

PJ's Electrical MASTER ELECTRICIAN

Licensed & Insured • Providing safe, reliable electrical services for residential and commercial projects.

NOW OFFERING FREE CONSULTATIONS.

Call today to schedule your appointment. (413) 366-1703 (Lic. #24046-A)

JAMES FERRIS: LICENSE #E16303

Free estimates. Insured. 50 years experience. No job too small. Cell (413)330-3682

LICENSED ELECTRICIAN

I offer good quality electrical work, no project too small. Service upgrades, pools, trustworthy, dependable & insured. Master Elec. #20773A. Text/call Luis 413-218-3301.

ZEN ELECTRIC COMPANY LLC

Fully licensed and insured; Master Electrician on staff. Call for all your electrical needs. No job too small. Senior citizen and Veteran Discount. A veteran owned company. MA License #8101A1. Call John at (413) 206-6509 *Every customer gets a free gem stone.*

HOME IMPROVEMENT

CHAMELEON PAINTING & REMODELING

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR Remodeling & Deck Specialists Residential/Commercial Fully Insured • Free Estimates 413-351-1147

SERVICES

INSTRUCTION

NRA Certified Basic Pistol Course with Live Fire for License to Carry permit \$140. Matt Marcinkiewicz muscione@hotmail.com 413-537-0620

LANDSCAPING

****ALL SEASON**** Specializing in shrub trimming, pruning, design, deliveries, loader, backhoe, insured. Professional. Please call Bob (413)537-5789 (413)538-7954.

MASONRY

STOP WET BASEMENTS

ABC MASONRY & BASEMENT WATERPROOFING

All brick, block, stone, concrete. Hatchway doors, basement windows, chimneys rebuilt & repaired, foundations repaired, basement waterproofing systems, sump pumps. BBB+ rating. Free estimates. Lic #14790. Call (413)569-1611, (413)374-5377

PAINTING

KEN'S PAINTING SERVICES. Interior painting/staining, wallpaper removal, wall/ceiling resurfacing, cabinet painting. Quality workmanship, fully insured. Free estimates. Call 413-896-8264.

PLUMBING

GREG LAFONTAIN PLUMBING & HEATING Lic #19196 Repairs & Replacement of fixtures, water heater installations, steam/HW boiler replacement. Kitchen & Bath remodeling. 30 years experience. Fully insured. \$10 Gift Card With Work Performed. Call Greg (413)592-1505

TUNE-UPS

SNOWBLOWER & LAWNMOWER TUNE UP & REPAIR

A & M TUNE-UPS Snowblowers, Push Lawnmowers, Riding Mowers & Small Engine Repair. Work done at your home. Call Mike (413) 348-7967

SERVICES

RUBBISH REMOVAL

BOB ROBILLARD'S RUBBISH REMOVAL Attics, Cellars, Garages cleaned, Pools/Hot Tubs Removed. Family owned/operated since 1950 (413)537-5090

SNOWPLOWING

RESIDENTIAL Snowplowing Service. Wilbraham residential only Call or Text now. Limited space available. 413-519-5439

TREE WORK

AAA-TROM'S TREE SERVICE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE. Residential removal of trees. Free estimates. Fully insured W/Workman's Comp. Remove them before the wind takes them down. Cordwood, stump grinding. Call 413-283-6374.

DL & G TREE SERVICE. Everything from tree pruning, tree removal, stump grinding, storm damage and brush chipping. Honest and Dependable. Fully insured. Now offering a Senior Citizen and Veteran discount. Call today for free estimate (413)478-4212

STUMP GRINDING

DL & G STUMP GRINDING Grinding stumps of all sizes, insured & certified. Senior discounts. Call Dave 413-478-4212

AUTO

CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS

FREE TOWING FAST SERVICE CASH PAID AS IS CALL OR TEXT 413-219-6839

HELP WANTED

LUDLOW PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT PARA-EDUCATOR. Submit resume and letter of intent to: www.schoolspring.com

NEIGHBORLY CLEANING & CARE is looking for mature, responsible adults with own transportation, experience and references for a housekeeping position. Hours 7:30- 2:30. Call Nancy today (413)267-4297 or (413) 544-0864.

VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICER POSITION

The Town of Sturbridge is accepting applications to fill the part-time, 10 hours per week, Veteran Service Officer position. The position will act as a Veterans' Agent and thus requires all appropriate State and Federal certification. Applications are available on-line on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities. <https://www.sturbridge.gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities>

The position is non-union and reports to the Town Administrator. *The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).*

REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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

QUAINT WEST BROOKFIELD BROOKHAVEN LAKE by babbling brook, I-shaped 2bdm. ranch, 2/full baths, finished basement, walkout slider, enclosed front porch. Enjoy nature trails, very quiet private area. \$2850/monthly rental fee. Bernice Stone 774-262-6667.

FOR RENT



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.



STAY ON TOP OF IT ALL!

Subscribe Today!

Turley Publications, Inc.
12 HOMETOWN NEWSPAPERS
413.283.8393
www.turley.com
24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

Find archives of this local newspaper at www.newspapers.turley.com

EARLY DEADLINE

In observance of **NEW YEAR'S** for Dec. 29-Jan. 2 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!** Place your advertisement no later than **Thurs., Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.**

A TURLEY PUBLICATION
24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 • 413-283-8393 • www.turley.com

FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 DEADLINES: FRIDAY AT NOON
or call: 413-283-8393

CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price \$26.00
21 Base Price \$26.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Number of Weeks: _____ X per week rate = \$ _____
 Credit Card: MasterCard VISA Discover Cash Check# _____
 Card #: _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV _____
 Amount of charge: _____ Date: _____

Walker Home Improvement
Finish Carpentry • Framing • Drywall • Painting • & more!
(413) 687-5552

Quabbin Village Hills
Circulation: 50,500

Suburban Residential
Circulation: 59,000

Hilltowns
Circulation: 9,800

All Three ZONES for \$26.00 for 20 words plus 50¢ for each additional word.

GREAT VALUE!

ALL 3 ZONES NOW FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

Make checks payable to Turley Publications

OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!

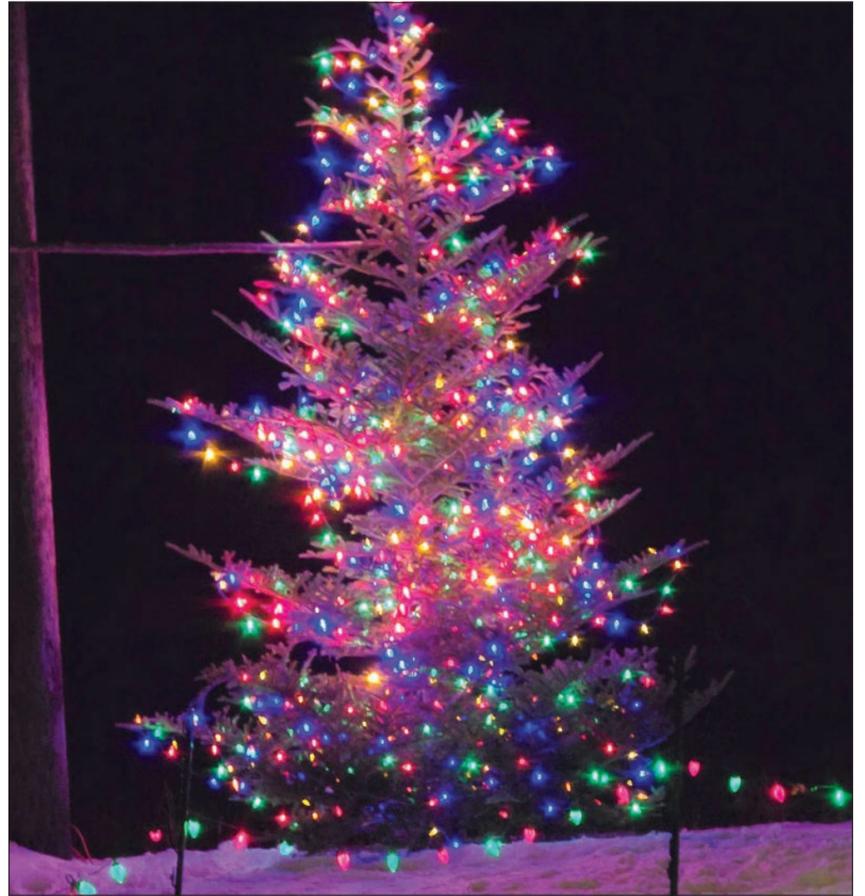
WORTHINGTON

Worthington hosts tree lighting and Santa Claus



This family visited with Santa Claus at the annual tree lighting ceremony in Worthington.

Photos by Debbi Dreschnack



The lights are now on this tree in Worthington during the Christmas season.



This mother and child dressed for the weather at the annual tree lighting in Worthington.

WESTFIELD

WB donates to Revitalize CDC



Paola Vargas, senior social worker, from left; Camilla Hillian, director, both of Bloomfield Connecticut's Social and Youth Services Department; Lindsay Sanchez, assistant vice president/branch manager and Jesse Eugenio, business specialist, both of Westfield Bank.

Submitted photo

Westfield Bank holds food drive

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Bank invited its employees, customers and community members across Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut to help fight hunger in local communities as part of its 2025 Food Drive.

More than 800,000 people in Massachusetts and over half a million Connecticut residents struggle with hunger, according to the non-profit food bank network Feeding America. From Monday, Oct. 20 through Monday, Nov. 17, all Westfield Bank branches collected non-perishable food items and monetary donations.

Food items included those needed for Thanksgiving dinners as well as other staples to keep shelves stocked throughout the holiday season. Each branch donated to a food pantry or community kitchen local to their service area.

“We are proud to host a drive that helps deliver food to many of our local organizations during this holiday season. To give back to our community is an essential part of our mission, and we are happy to continue to partner with so many great community partners who support those in need,” said James C. Hagan, president

and CEO of Westfield Bank.

Westfield Bank, headquartered in Westfield, Massachusetts, is a federally chartered savings bank organized in 1853 and is the largest publicly traded bank headquartered in Western Massachusetts. Currently, the Bank has twenty-five branch offices, forty-nine ATMs and an additional thirty seasonal ATMs and serves Hampden and Hampshire counties in Western Massachusetts and Hartford County in Northern Connecticut. To learn more, people may visit the bank's website at www.westfield-bank.com

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Bank announced a \$5,000 donation to Revitalize CDC, a Springfield-based nonprofit that works to stabilize homes and strengthen neighborhoods across Western Massachusetts.

“Revitalize CDC does vital work, repairing homes for veterans, older adults, families in need, and those living with disabilities to improve the health and well-being of individuals and families,” said James C. Hagan, President and CEO of Westfield Bank. “We’re proud to support them in making our communities better by making them healthier, stronger and more resilient.”

Founded in 1992,

Revitalize CDC has served more than 30,000 individuals and invested over \$52 million into critical home repairs, bridging food insecurity gaps through delivery of fresh foods, and providing education and support for chronic health conditions.

“Revitalize CDC is deeply grateful to Westfield Bank for their generous \$5,000 contribution. Their continued partnership strengthens our mission and creates meaningful impact in the neighborhoods we serve. We especially thank Sherleen Crespo, Westfield Bank Vice President and Branch Manager, Revitalize CDC board member and dedicated #GreenNFit Neighborhood

Rebuild House Captain for her leadership and unwavering commitment to our work. Her hands-on support truly helps transform homes, lives, and communities,” said Colleen Shanley-Loveless, President and CEO of Revitalize CDC.

The donation from Westfield Bank will help fuel the organization's efforts in home repairs, accessibility modifications and energy efficiency upgrades, moving neighborhoods forward and supporting people, who otherwise may not have access to such resources.

For more information on Revitalize CDC's mission and programs, people may visit revitalizecdc.com



Chelsea McGrath, Vice President, Operations and Finance, Revitalize CDC; Colleen Shanley-Loveless, President and CEO, Revitalize CDC; Sherleen Crespo, Westfield Bank Vice President and Branch Manager and Ethel Griffin, Vice President, Community Engagement, Revitalize CDC.

Submitted photo