

"Believe in yourself. Have faith in your abilities," – Norman Vincent Peale

# Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

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

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## HILLTOWNS

# Santa Claus visits the Hilltowns

By Kathryn Koegel  
Correspondent

On Saturday, Dec. 14 a familiar red-suited man seemed to be here, there and everywhere.

We caught up with him in Huntington as well as Russell. And while in much of the world he rides a sleigh pulled by reindeer in places like Australia, kangaroos take the rein and in the Hilltowns he is driven by a fire truck. The trucks, lit festively for the season, drive him to his appointed rounds with children. In Huntington he even drives by children's houses and they all come out to cheer

It was still light out when the sirens blared from the Huntington Fire House on Route 20 and whisked Santa to the town green where he took up a brief residency in the gazebo. Alighting from the truck helped by elf John McVeigh, Assistant Chief, he high fived the line of children before listening to their heart's desires. Santa here is reputed to be related to Assistant Fire Chief Graydon, who retired this year.

Just over Route 20 in Russell, Santa, with his most amiable wife, her first appearance at a Hilltown event, kicked off the annual Russell Parade of Lights. While his suit lined with fur prepared him for the 20 degree weather, he and Mrs.

Claus greeted young and old alike from warmth of the town hall.

After this location, he planned on hopping another fire truck down to a nursing home in Chicopee. "You can't forget the older people in nursing homes and those with dementia," he said. Mrs. Claus looked relieved to have a seat as she had spent the day before making 350 sugar cookies and 300 ginger snaps that she handed out to the crowd.

With Santa's work done, the annual Russell Light Parade kicked off to a record crowd as well as new high



This couple decorated in lights got into the holiday spirit.

SANTA, page 2



This Westhampton Fire Truck is ablaze with Christmas lights as is the vehicle behind it.

Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel

## HILLTOWNS

# New ADU regulations helpful for Hilltowners

By Kathryn Koegel  
Correspondent

With 2024 being declared the worst year in recent memory for housing, new Massachusetts regulations on so-called "granny flats," technically known as Accessory Dwelling Units or ADUs, may bring about a glimmer of hope for Hilltowners.

Last week, The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities issued draft regulations for these units and announced a public comment period that will open Dec. 20. Town officials in the Hilltowns are studying up on the new rulings and prepping for the potential increase in housing they may bring.

Up in Worthington, "We just passed a new ADU by-law a year or so ago," says Select Board Chair Charley Rose. "Previous to that, Worthington didn't allow any kind of ADU or second dwelling on a single property. Our by-law is pretty close to the new state law, but they are having to update ours to comply."

Meg Stewart and her wife have owned property in Worthington since 2005 and her ADU has been a way to keep family close. Their 27 year-old son, who works in a farm animal sanctuary in the Berkshires now lives in the ADU they had built. Their main house was purchased as a cabin on 18 acres and is used part-time by them. Meg is a retired public school teacher and her wife is still working as a professor at Vassar. The ADU is 500 sq. ft. and was constructed just this past March.

"We're always going to have a place to live in," says Stewart. "We like having a compound," she jokes. "The air is good, the water great. We're aging. Our son is around and can help us do things."

"It's becoming more common," she says. "We were not the only ones looking at ADUs. It's so hard for young people to buy a house."

The process of getting that ADU had its challenges, especially in regard to permitting. "It took a lot of back and forth with the building inspector,"

ADU, page 2

## OTIS

# Hilltown Blues Jam gather once a month to perform



Hilltown Blues Jam perform on stage including Chuck on electronic sax, Randy on his Gibson Les Paul Junior, John on drums and Ron on lead guitar.

Turley photos by Mary Kronholm

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

Every third Sunday of the month there is a Hilltown Blues Jam at the Knox Trail Inn in Otis. It is an Open Mic event and it's a very casual affair.

Just show up with your instrument, sign the sheet, first names only, and the host will let you know when it's time to be on stage. A lot of table-hopping and visiting happens while performers

are waiting to play.

There is more or less, a house, or backup band already in place. Percussion and a couple of guitars; this Sunday it was bass player, Mike Buscemi, percussion John Piper, visiting keyboardist Bob Toriani and Marcia Gamash served as guest host as well as singing and playing guitar.

These musicians can accompany a performer,

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# HILLTOWNS

## Scottish Festival donates to two non-profits

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

HILLTOWNS – On Friday, Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. at the Westfield Athenium Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival, Chairman Peter Langmore presented checks to two non-profit organizations, each of which provides support in the community.

The festival is one of the largest Celtic celebrations in the Eastern United States and had another record-breaking year, according to Langmore. The festival donated \$43,000 to: Forum House/Viability, Westfield and River Valley Counseling Center, Holyoke. Each organization received \$21,500, furthering their vital work in supporting the Western Massachusetts community.

Stephen Fay, aide to Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia presented a proclamation from the city of Holyoke.

Sen. John Velis spoke about the festival's dedication and efforts to donate to non-profits. State Rep. Kelly Pease was on hand also to commend the festival for its efforts.

Senior Forum House Director Erin Godfrey spoke on behalf of Forum House/Viability and expressed appreciation for over 20 years of continued support. Sue Cauley accepted the check for Forum House/Viability and Dr. Elian Campbell, Assistant Executive Director/Clinical Director accepted the check for River Valley Counseling Center.

Over its 29-year history, the festival has raised and donated \$385,565 to charitable organizations and provided student scholarships, fostering the preservation of Celtic culture and heritage.

## ADU

said Stewart. "It was a learning process." They worked with a company called Backyard ADUs. "These are new things that towns are grappling with. It's different than other types of housing. For her, the main issue was that it "doesn't have a basement but an 18 inch crawl space. The town said that won't work here. But [what we chose] are also called 'Alaskan flats.' They also put them in Maine and Norway. The foundation is shallow, but frost protected. It's built differently than cinder block or rock. The town looked at us as if we had three heads."

"It took two months to approve," continues Stewart "We were very pushy. We needed the house for our son. I was constantly calling the building inspector and builder. It finally got approved. I was retired, so I had time. For Stewart and her wife, the project cost around \$200,000 plus the cost of clearing the land for the unit. They did not have to put in a new well, but did need to put in full septic.

In Williamsburg, Trish LeFreniere did the reverse of Stewart. She turned: "My former two car garage into my cozy, accessible ADU" and gave use of the house to family.

"I just love it although it took a drastic bit of downsizing. I still haven't quite found a spot for everything. But the best part is having my son and his family settled into the main house. I feel I can age in place here in my favorite hunk of land."

Down in Florence, Valle Dwight also wanted a connection to family. She and her husband have an adult son with Down's Syndrome and wanted a place for her son to have both independence and connection. "We want him to be independent from us," she says. "But as my husband and I get older, it has a single floor. Aiden could live in the house with a care provider."

The decision has been a very favor-



The crane puts a section of the Dwight's ADU on the foundation. Submitted photos

able financial one. "We live in Florence and can walk everywhere," she says. Her son Aiden is known in town and can be independent there. "Investing money in a place not in Florence center did not make sense. And we could not afford anything. We're not rich people," she says. She works at a non-profit that advocates for people with disabilities. Her son is not yet ready to move into the ADU so they rent out the two bedroom ADU for \$1,750 a month, which pays the mortgage. "We have a lovely tenant," she says.

"We decided to refinance our house and got the ADU before Covid hit." They paid \$195,000 to Backyard ADUs, which built the unit off site. "They hauled it in two different pieces," she says. "They use a crane and truck to put it on your foundation." She found the construction process astonishing. Once the unit was placed, "Workers swarm like ants hooking everything up. It comes with cabinets and floors. They do the finishing like backsplashes on site." They are on town water so there was no septic upgrade required. One thing to note: "all utilities have to come from your house. The plumbing is set up to come through your house then to the sewer. Same with electricity." Northampton has ADUs by right in town

from page 1



The Dwights in Florence but an ADU as a place for their disabled adult son to have both independence and septic. He looks towards the main house from the ADU.

bylaws so extensive permitting was not necessary.

Will granny flats ease the affordable housing shortage? Dave Christopolis, executive director of the Hilltown Community Development Corporation, for whom one-third of the organizations budget is focused on affordable housing, thinks it is a step in the right direction.

"It's a good example of what people could do," he says. There are a lot of Hilltowners who are getting to a point where it is tough to manage an old farmhouse. They could rent the house and live in the ADU to generate more income."

"The new regulation has disincentives for using these for seasonal AirBNBs," he continues. But it's going to affect septic and well capacity. If you add a 900 sq ft. ADU its like adding another bed and bath to a house. You cannot attach it to current septic and have it work."

"Big picture, it is a step in the right direction," he says. In the Hilltowns, as in so many other places in the US, "Zoning is a big part of the problem." He cites what is going on in New Zealand as a model. "They changed zoning to build up more. It addressed the housing problem quickly and did not create sprawl."



Chester Fire Department won best in first responder in the parade.



This giant rooster in a Santa suit was one of the many decorations along the parade route.

## SANTA

from page 1

for the number of vehicles participating: 37, according to Melissa Castro of the town's Recreation Committee.

The event was started by Castro, "when I was 20 and part of Russell Fire. The department went to a parade of lights in Enfield, Connecticut and we had so much fun. When we got back I said that Russell needed something like that. I went to my chief and he told me I could run with it as long as I got an officer to sign off as a co-organizer. I don't remember how many we had that

first year, but it went well. I kept it going until 2007 when I moved to work as a paramedic in Pittsfield."

Castro is back to help organize but says that the Recreation Committee took it over after that and has run it the past 13 years. The organization gives out awards for best vehicles and Donald York of Westfield won first place in the non-emergency category with a tractor he drove as the Grinch. The Chester Fire Department won first place in the emergency vehicle department.



This youngster has a perfect view of the parade.

## SCHOOLS & YOUTH

# Student musicians, vocalists win musical festival spots

By Wendy Long  
Correspondent

“It’s such an experience to play with other serious musicians,” said eighth grader Tess Hansen, who will return to the Western Massachusetts Music Educators Western District junior music festival in March, 2025.

Of the five students from Gateway Regional Middle High School winning spots for the junior festival, Hansen is the only one returning for a second year.

Trumpet player Josh Daninburg said that the audition held at Westfield State College on Dec. 7 “was a challenge I needed most. It’s a good thing.”

Three vocalists were also selected for the junior festival: eighth grader Madison Brant, soprano; eighth grader Autumn Cosby, alto and ninth grader Avery Grant, soprano. Of the audition, Cosby said, “Honestly, I was a lot more nervous than I thought I’d be. But I got through it and felt good about it.” Grant also described being nervous and explained that the audition had required singing a prepared audition piece, plus sight singing and solfege, think “do, me, me.”

Four Gateway instrumentalists also won spots for the senior district festi-



Shown from left are trombonist, Tess Hansen; trumpet player Josh Daninburg and singers, Autumn Cosby and Avery Grant. All earned spots at the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Western District Junior Festival. Auditions were held at Westfield State University on Saturday, Dec. 7.

Turley photo by Wendy Long

val in January senior, Evan Fogue on bassoon; senior and band president, Olivia McIver on flute and sophomore, Charlotte Hansen on trumpet will all perform with the festival Concert Band. Freshman Felina Knachel won a coveted spot playing baritone sax with the festi-

val’s Jazz Band.

Students said they were supported by their music teachers: Beth Guertin, instrumental and Daniel Rose, choral. The two were thrilled with their students’ success.

Rose, in his second year at Gateway

Regional, leads a small, but dedicated, group of choral students and size, he says, has its advantages. “They have to know their part or it’s evident,” Rose said. “Everyone here pulls their weight. There’s no coasting. They really know their respective parts.”

“I love to provide more experiences for kids to make music beyond our own school performances,” Guertin said. “There is more work involved sometimes, and our students handled it so well. Now they will get to make music with kids from all over Western Massachusetts, and that is a very special experience for them. I’m very happy to have these kids representing Gateway!”

Both music festivals will be held in 2025 at Minnechaug Regional High School, 621 Main St., Wilbraham. Senior Festival musicians will rehearse from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on successive Saturdays, Jan. 11 and Jan. 18. Their concert will begin on Saturday, Jan. 18 at 3 p.m. Snow dates are Sundays, Jan. 12 and 19.

The Junior Festival ensembles will rehearse on Saturdays, March 8 and March 15 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. with their concert also beginning at 3 p.m. Snow dates are Sundays, March 9 and 16.

Tickets are \$15 each and may be purchased online at [mmeawd.org/tickets](http://mmeawd.org/tickets).

### COLLEGE NEWS

## Sophie Redmond completes first semester at ECSU

WILLIMANTIC, CT – Sophie Redmond of Easthampton concluded her first semester at Eastern Connecticut State University this fall 2024.

She is a first-year student, majoring in psychology. At more than 800 students, it’s the largest incoming class

since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, marking a 32% growth over last year’s incoming class and pushing the overall campus residency to more than 90%. Among the class of 2028, 37% are the first in their families to attend college.

## Kieran Oliver receives Collaboration Recognition Award

NEWTON – Recipients of the Collaboration Recognition Award are selected by their peers for exemplifying superior skills in collaboration by sharing ideas and useful information, communicating in a professional manner and cooperating in a way to ensure success.

Kieran Oliver of Westfield was recognized by Lasell University in the fall of 2024 for the Collaboration Recognition Award. She is majoring in communication radio video production.

Collaboration is a main objective

of the Lasell University mission statement. A key feature of this program is a peer-nomination process at the end of the semester. This intentional experience in collaboration builds on the Core Curriculum learning outcome of Teamwork, which is recognized by the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) as one of eight key competencies of career readiness and research shows that 81% of employers hiring college graduates are looking for evidence of an Ability to Work in a Team.

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# OPINION

## GUEST COLUMN

### A wintry hike on Mt. Monadnock

By Julie Midura  
Guest Columnist

“I don’t think we’re on the trail anymore.” Tom and I drove to Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire last week following a recent snowstorm. After parking our car at the trailhead, we made quick work of the road walk to the old Halfway House site, where we had a choice to make. We could continue straight ahead onto the well packed out and very popular White Arrow Trail, or hang a sharp right onto the lesser used and more difficult to follow Hello Rock Trail.



We paused when we reached the junction. One look in the direction of Hello Rock Trail told us that we would have our work cut out for us if we chose that route. Not only was the snow much deeper than we expected, but there were no other boot prints in sight. We would be breaking trail.

After not hiking anything strenuous in weeks and feeling less than confident in our ability to tackle some moderate trail breaking, I hesitated for a fraction of a second. I took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, then turned right towards Hello Rock Trail. No time like the present to see just how out of shape we were!

As we broke through the calf-deep, thick blanket of white that covered the tread-way, the path was fairly obvious- four feet wide and slightly lower than the earth on either side. But we continued forward, undaunted by the fact that we were fairly certain we were no longer on the actual trail. After all, if we couldn’t locate the path, we’d just follow our footprints in the snow back to where the trail was more obvious, and then attempt to find the spot where we had made a wrong turn. In the meantime, we enjoyed moving through the Narnia-like forest of white.

I was in the lead when I stopped suddenly at the base of a very steep rock outcropping. The thought of going up the hill made my heart rate soar. However, the hope that we might be able to catch sight of the trail from the top and reconnect with the path we were supposed to be on helped assuage my fear. I ignored my rapidly beating heart, slammed my trekking poles into the snow-covered rock, kicked my spike-clad boots into the snow, and hauled myself up.

HIKING, page 5

### Early Christmas shoppers...



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

## GUEST COLUMN



By Ellenor Downer

Snowy owls have already been spotted in Massachusetts this year. They come from the tundra area of Canada into the United States during the winter. Usually, the snowy owls that head to this area are immature. This irruptive behavior may or may not be coordinated with the lemming cycle, one of their primary foods especially during their breeding cycle.

The snowy owl is about 24 inches long and primarily white, yellow eyes and variable amounts of black spots and barring. Immatures are darker than adults and females darker than males.

Snowy owls frequently hunt during the day. Their diet is mainly rodents, Arctic and



Snowy owl

snowshoe hares, fish, birds including waterfowl and carrion.

They nest on the tundra in a shallow depression on a mound on top or on a gravel mound. They line the nest with feathers and bits of moss. The female lays three to ten white eggs. When prey is abundant the

BACKYARD, page 6

### Coriander makes a great cookie



by Roberta McQuaid

Today was the designated day to begin to bake like crazy. Personally, I wish we could cull the number, and honestly the sheer volume of Christmas cookies we make, but if the kids or my husband hear of that I will be banished to Grinch status.

It’s a tradition to go through the recipes ahead of time and decide what cookies we’ll bake.

One of my all-time favorites, and one I would never consider culling, is the coriander cookie. My family tried a sample at Old Sturbridge Village’s Christmas by Candlelight some years back and enjoyed it so much we added the recipe to our repertoire. Yummy indeed!

You may be surprised to learn that Coriander sativum is the Latin name for two herbs. Confused? Most folks are when they learn that the seeds of this plant are called coriander, while the leaves are known as cilantro.

Both have been used for culinary purposes since the beginning of time! All portions of the plant are edible but some argue that the green portion is barely that.

Read on.

I liken cilantro to be the “marigold” of the herb world. Either you love it or you hate it. I, for one, immensely dislike it and if given the chance to pick it out of my salsa I will certainly do it! Even in a restaurant.

I found it interesting to learn that some people possess a genetically predisposed aversion to it, according to studies by Charles J. Wysocki of the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia.

To me it has a bitter taste that I have a hard time describing beyond that. Dirty?

GARDEN, page 6

## EDITORIAL POLICY

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

## Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

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

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

# OPINION

## HILLTOWN HISTORY

### Dr. Seuss became popular children's author

By Deborah Daniels  
Correspondent

If you grew up with Dick and Jane what a relief it was to read a Dr. Seuss primer to your kids or grandkids.

Dr. Seuss or Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904 - 1991) as he was christened, singularly reinvigorated early education. Who can resist reading "Hop on Pop?" What would Christmas be without "How the Grinch Stole Christmas?" This author introduced humor, whimsy and nonsense into read-aloud books for kids.

Maybe the fact that your first novel was rejected by some 30 to 40 publishers helped steer him into the world of children's literature. He wrote books under the name Theo LeSieg, none were published. His first children's book published in 1937 was "And to Think I Saw It On Mulberry Street." It is about the fantastical imaginings of a child walking home from school and it was popular. There is a real Mulberry Street in Springfield not far from the Springfield Museum.

Dr. Seuss grew up on Fairfield St. in Springfield. His father managed a brewery until Prohibition when he became the Superintendent of the Springfield Park system. Imagine growing up with frequent visits with your father to all the parks in Springfield?

Seuss went to Dartmouth College and briefly to Oxford University. He adopted the nickname of Dr. Seuss because his father wanted him to become a doctor, which he never did but also because he dropped out of Oxford never graduating with his doctorate. Upon graduation he worked as an illustrator for Life and Vanity Fair magazines. His most lucrative work came advertising Flit insect repellent made by Standard Oil Co. It ran advertisements from 1928 - 1941 and it was the best selling insect spray of its time.

Seuss married twice, first to Helen Palmer in 1927 until her death in 1967 of suicide and then to Audrey Dimond in 1968. He had no children. He said, "you have 'em I'll entertain 'em."

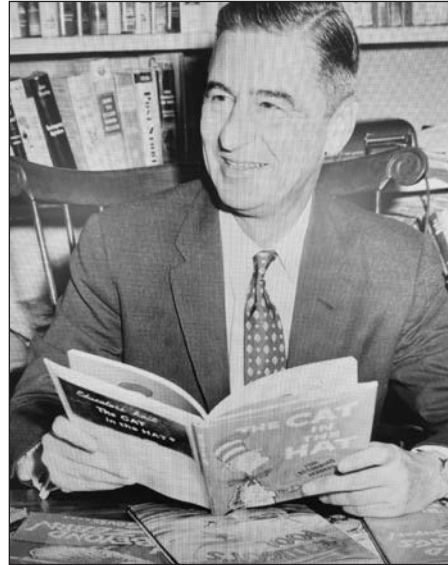
"Horton Hatches the Egg" was his next hit published in 1940. It is about an elephant, who is duped into sitting on a bird egg, while the bird goes off on vacation. The egg hatches with a bird body and an elephant head. He wrote in both verse and text with clever and wild imaginative drawings to accompany his work.

The war years (1943 - 1946) saw Dr. Seuss producing posters to support the war effort and Army training films for the U.S. Army documentary division. He went on to write "Horton Hears a Who" (1954) and "The Lorax" (1971) that had larger universal themes of respect for all life and for the environment. These appealed to both children and adults. "The Cat In the Hat" (1957) was a tremendous success. By 1958 Seuss founded Beginner Books Inc. which became a division of Random House publishers. His "1 Fish 2 Fish Red Fish Blue Fish" book (1960), "Green Eggs and Ham" (1960) and "Hop on Pop" (1963) became kindergarten bestsellers.

Mainly he illustrated his books with pencil drawings and watercolor. His drawing emphasized motion and energy, which reflected the high energy of kids and he favored droopy curved lines over straight lines, perhaps symbolic of coloring outside the lines as in a child's world. There was no doubt children loved his books. Later animation brought his work onto films and movies.

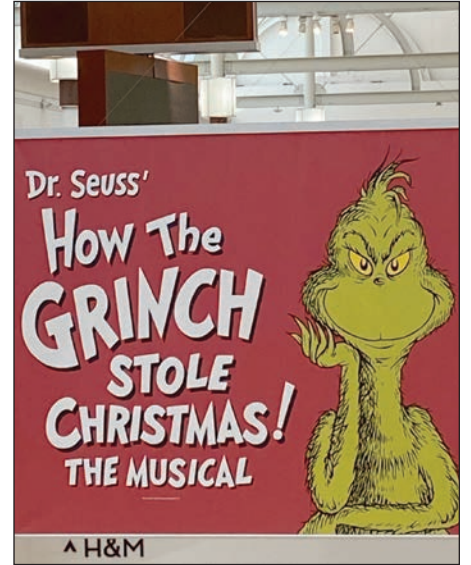
Dr. Seuss received a Pulitzer Prize citation for his contribution over 50 years to the education and enjoyment of children and their parents. There have been 600 million copies of Dr. Seuss books sold worldwide. They have been translated into 20 languages. You can pick up any copy of his books and find yourself smiling as you read it.

Every year at Dartmouth College incoming students who join the Outing Club dine on green eggs and ham. There is a crater on the planet Mercury named after him - Geisel. He was definitely honored by that gesture. Make it a point to put "Horton Hears a Who" on your must read book list. It will open your mind and heart, just the ticket for this holiday season.



This is a 1957 photo of Dr. Seuss.

Submitted photo



This banner advertises the musical, How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss.



Springfield Museum Dr. Seuss Sculpture Park with Dr. Seuss sitting in the chair with the Cat in the Hat sculptures. There are other sculptures of his creatures in this little park outside the museum, referred to as the Quadrangle with five museums there.

Turley photos by Deborah Daniels

## HIKING

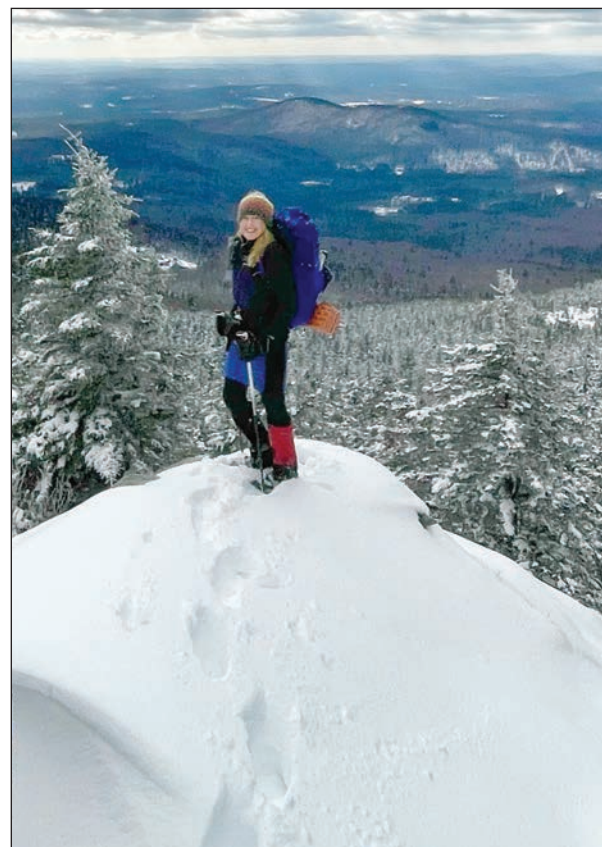
Only to realize that "You can't get there from here."

Upon reaching the top of the snow covered ledge, we discovered that we were mere feet from a sheer ver-

tical drop-off. At this point, we had three options. Well, in reality, just two, since plunging off the ledge onto the jagged rocks below was never really a viable option to begin with.



Tom takes in the beautiful snow covered view.



Julie smiles brightly at the top of Mt. Monadnock.

Submitted photo

1. Continue bushwhacking upwards in an attempt to see where we would end up. The hope being that we'd eventually find Cliff Walk Trail. (Tom's idea)

2. Turn back and try to find where we zigged when we should have zagged, and get back on the actual trail. (My idea)

One of the great things about hiking with a partner is that when one of you has a harebrained, cockamamie, dare I say utterly ridiculous idea, the more rational one can help you dial back the crazy, so to speak

Now I'm not saying that I'm always the logical part of the equation. Quite the contrary. I'm usually the one who likes to push the envelope when we hike together. You know- find out just how much we are capable of.

In those instances, Tom graciously offers his unsolicited advice, both for the betterment of our marriage, as well as to ensure that we aren't put into a perilous situation by my occasionally wacky ideas.

On Saturday, however, it was my turn to be the sensible half of our partnership. With temperatures in the teens, I had no desire to continue bushwhacking in an area where a magnitude of snow had effectively erased the crevices and deep holes surrounding the enormous boulders which were lying in wait to swallow a leg or twist an ankle. And after only mild persuasion on my part, Tom agreed. Needless to say, 'self preservation' won out over 'adrenaline rush' and we turned back, eventually finding the sharp right turn we had missed earlier.

And at the end of the day, the summit was reached, views were had, pizza was consumed, hot cider was enjoyed, joy was found. And we lived to hike another day. Honestly, what more could we possibly ask for? See you in the wintry wild places, my friends!

Follow Julie and Tom on Instagram @morethan-themountain for more of their hiking adventures.

from page 4

## BLANDFORD

### Town had busy day last Dec. 7

*Note: Photos of these events appeared in the Dec. 12 edition*

By **Mary Kronholm**  
Correspondent

BLANDFORD – Saturday morning, Dec. 7, started off with the Firemen's Association serving over 400 pancakes, 35 pounds of bacon, four gallons of orange juice, two gallons of apple cider, and 15 pounds of sausage.

Over 50 cups of hot chocolate and more than that of the Starbucks coffee. There were over 105 people having pancakes and many supporters from other Hilltown Fire Departments.

Organizer EMT Pat Lombardo called it another "very successful event" and expressed his thanks and appreciation to all who donated, provided the 65 raffle items and those who helped out serving, arranging, and most important, cleaning up. "Their continued support is so important," he said, adding "It's the town's support that really matters."

Magdalena Zajko once again provided all the decorations, children's gifts and centerpieces for all the tables. But her piece de resistance was the new curtains on the stage.

"It was my worst nightmare," she said, meaning the stage area is used to store multiple items from several different departments and she wanted to conceal any disarray. Which she did successfully with the new stage drapes.

The setup crew worked tirelessly Friday night to make sure everything was in order, and that included the drapes. Someone had to run to their home to bring back a ladder that was tall enough to reach the curtain pulls on the stage.

Joann Martin and Keri Morawiec

were at the hot chocolate and coffee bar.

The additions for the hot cocoa included marshmallows, sprinkles, whipped cream, chocolate or peppermint spoons or just plain candy canes. Morawiec said the most popular additions were the chocolate or peppermint spoons and the colored marshmallows. There were tiny marshmallows in pink and green, without flavor, and then there were also big pink peppermint flavored marshmallows.

Jennifer Girard and Jackie Coury from the Blandford Bistro helped both youngsters of all ages decorate gingerbread people or craft ornaments that were clear glass filled with seasonally colored pompoms and hand painted.

"The tables were filled with children and parents," said Girard.

Santa was on hand to greet everyone. Select Board Chair Cara Letendre and member TJ Cousineau had breakfast, too, and made the rounds of the tables as did Fire Chief Adam Dolby.

Fire Department members were all on hand to participate, cooking, serving or keeping the hot trays filled, and the Boomsma family, several firefighters themselves, helped out in multiple capacities.

Ticket sales was estimated at \$1,500 and raffle ticket sales was not immediately available. Most of the foods were donated and the meat was available at a discount, according to Lombardo.

The weekend was busy. In addition to the Pancake Breakfast, the Craft Fair at the Historical Society, Pet Photos with Santa at the Blandford Animal Hospital, cookie decorating at the Porter Memorial Library and Sunday night the Historical Society turned on the lights for the Christmas Tree.

## EASTHAMPTON

### bankESB donated \$5,000 to construct pickle ball courts

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB donated \$5,000 to the Easthampton Pickle ball Fundraising Project, a dedicated group of pickle ball enthusiasts, who have partnered with the Players Philanthropy Fund to raise money for new pickle ball courts.

There are currently two pickle ball courts located in the picturesque Nonotuck Park that were constructed in 2020.

Pickle ball is the fastest growing sport in the United States and these

courts are immensely popular, often with 20-24+ people waiting to play in just eight available spots. The Easthampton Pickle ball Fundraising Project will help to build two additional courts that will greatly benefit residents of all ages.

bankESB's charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, reflects the roots the bank has in its communities and its commitment to making a real difference in the neighborhoods it serves.

### bankESB promotes Stacey Grushkin

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB recently promoted Stacey Grushkin to accounting officer.

Grushkin was previously senior staff accountant at Abington Bank, part of Hometown Financial Group's family of banks that includes bankESB, bankHometown, North Shore Bank and Abington Bank, a division of North Shore Bank, as well as Hometown Mortgage.

Grushkin of Brockton has nearly 10 years of banking experience. She started at Abington Bank as a staff accountant in 2015 and was promoted to senior staff accountant in 2023. In her new role, she will lead the bankESB finance team and will also be responsible for regulatory reporting for Hometown Financial Group's family of banks.

Grushkin earned a bachelor's degree and a master's certificate in accounting and finance from

Bridgewater State University.

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton. Through our sponsorship and charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, bankESB and the Easthampton Savings Bank Charitable Foundation support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties. In 2023 alone, The Giving Tree donated nearly \$635,000 and over the past decade has donated more than \$3.6 million.

bankESB is a member of the Hometown Financial Group, a \$6.5 billion multibank mutual holding company headquartered in Easthampton and the parent company of the family of banks that includes bankESB, bankHometown, North Shore Bank and Abington Bank, a division of North Shore Bank, as well as Hometown Mortgage.

## OPINION

### BACKYARD

from page 4

clutch size is larger. They make barking noises during breeding, but are quiet in winter.

They inhabit the open tundra and when they move south, they inhabit airports, beaches, marshes and open fields.

Many years ago, a snowy owl appeared in Oakham during the winter. I was lucky to see it perched on a fence post near an open field in the daytime. People came from all over to see this rare visitor. Logan Airport is a popular winter stop over.

#### Bald eagle sighting

On Dec. 2 I received an email from a Brimfield resident. He said, "I've been checking the local ponds but not a lot happening. However, I have seen a bald eagle or two at the pond on New Reed Street four time in the last two weeks and another birder I met there reported seeing eagles there that I missed. On one visit two adult bald eagles were sitting in the same dead tree about fifteen feet apart."

#### Christmas Bird Count

He plans to participate in the Allen's Bird Count Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 14. National Audubon Society 125th Christmas Bird Counts take place Saturday, Dec. 14 through Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025. This is one of the most popular birding events of the year. It is rarely held on the actual designated holiday itself, counts are scheduled to take place on various days surrounding Dec. 25 within the official count period noted above. Counting takes place anytime during the 24 hours, midnight-to-midnight.

The goal is to find, identify and count all birds within a 15-mile diameter "count circle." All are welcome. Compilers do their best to make sure that beginners join a group with at least one experienced birder. Locations in late December include: Quabbin on Saturday, Dec. 28 compiler Scott Sumner at ssumner@aol.com and Westminster on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025 compiler Charles Caron at 978-874-5649 or caron-

ev@aol.com.

People may visit <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count> to read about CBC history, science and data.

#### Juncos and snow

The Brimfield resident noted a large flock of juncos about 40 the day before



Dark-eyed junco

the Dec. 5 snow storm. He said, "Storms a commin' I looked out near where the feeding stations are located and where I spread mixed seed on the ground and a quick count resulted in 40 junco. And chickadees and titmice were constantly back and forth to the black oil sunflower seed feeder." I also saw a large flock of juncos on my daughter's lawn in Barre on that Wednesday.

#### Pond visits

The Brimfield resident makes frequent trips to ponds in his area. He found most of them frozen over on Dec. 4. He did count 12 hooded mergansers at Holland Pond, a large group of mallards over 200 and three black ducks at Sherman Pond.

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](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

### GARDEN

from page 4

Soil-like?

Most people that do dislike it have a similar lack of descriptive ability; they just can't put their finger on it, but they don't like the taste...or the smell of it.

As I mentioned, cilantro is often used in salsa and other Mexican, Asian and Italian dishes including curries, sauces, salads and soups. If you prefer to grow the plant more for its greens and less for its seeds, manage it as you would spinach.

Sow seeds in the ground in the cool of the season and in succession every two weeks. It dislikes being transplanted but doesn't mind pot culture. Harvest greens rather aggressively – about one-third of the plant at a time.

Just like spinach, there are slow-to-bolt varieties to choose from such as aptly named "Slow Bolt" and "Longstanding."

Coriander seeds, on the other hand, have a pleasant (at least to me!) fragrance once dried. The scent is easier to pin-point too; nutty and spicy (ever so slightly) come to mind.

Coriander seed is also well known in various ethnic cuisines and is a favorite in spice blends, curry being the most popular. It is also used in the making of a number of distilled spirits and herbal liqueurs, and cookies.

It's funny that I can like one part of the plant and not the other. Coriander seed can be eaten whole, crushed or powdered.

The Herb Society noted that during World War II the seeds were coated in white or pink sugar and thrown from carnival wagons, earning the name "confetti" or "confetti!" When the seeds were replaced by balls of colored paper the name confetti stuck. Take this one to your next game of Cruise Ship Trivia!

It is easy to harvest the seeds. Simply let the heads dry to brown right on the plant. Clip them and place inside a paper bag; as they dry further they will open and the seeds will pop out.

Even if you are only interested in harvesting the seeds, multiple plantings (or a big garden patch) are necessary to get a decent-sized harvest.

No matter how you like your

Coriander sativum, sow the seeds in a sunny, well-drained spot in place for the best success. If you let a few drop their seed each year, chances are you will be blessed with volunteers.

Enough writing, I have four batches of cookies to get in the freezer!

Merry Christmas to all of my gardening friends out there!

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

# RUSSELL



A petition has been started on Change.org to preserve access to the play structure and the ball fields near the closed elementary school which is now the police station



The town has suggested an old play spaces behind the library but access is limited and not maintained say residents



Rusted play structures are evident in the recreation area behind the library. *Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel*

## Residents start citizen petition to keep playground open

By Kathryn Koegel  
Correspondent

RUSSELL – In response to the Russell Police telling residents that the playground near their headquarters, the former elementary school, is off limits to children, a petition on Change.org has been started by resident Jessica Martell.

So far, 302 people have signed. “As a parent of enthusiastic Little League players, I am deeply connected to the Gateway Little League community. Many of our children rely on this opportunity not merely as a pastime, but as a developmental platform to learn teamwork, discipline and ambition. We are fighting for the children’s right to play on the field at the old Russell Elementary School, which the Russell Montgomery Police Department is currently trying to not allow us,” she said in the petition.

“Denying Gateway Little League the use of the Russell Elementary School field will not only strip our children of their preferred playing ground, but also deny them an environment that they’re familiar and comfortable with, one in which they’ve nurtured their ambitions and developed bonds with their peers,” said Martell.

When asked for comment, Russell Police Chief Kevin Hennessy said: “We are not prepared to make a statement yet, but do not believe what you read on social media.” The police have used

the shuttered elementary school as their headquarters for the last eight years. They book and process individuals in custody in the facility. They also use the building for police training events.

Megan Ellinger, of Woronoco said that the field was not just for Little League but for other beloved local events. “The Russell Recreation Committee was told it may be the last year we’d be able to have the egg hunt there because it was going to be under construction next year. The chief didn’t really want kids there because it would be too dangerous for them to see people being arrested and brought in to the station. I thought the police were there on a temporary basis but it seems they’re moving on in and staying.”

Ellinger finds communications regarding the issue frustrating. “I’d originally heard that the Russell Police Department was going to allow use of the ball field during certain seasons because Little League put about \$10,000 into the field.”

Are there alternative places for local children to play? “The other field and ‘playground’ that is being offered up instead is located behind the Russell Library,” says Ellinger. “It is not adequate at all. It’s actually quite dangerous and I’m surprised the town would promote its use for so many families without considering its condition. It’s a very sad little park. There are four swings and a

slide and a basketball hoop where the pool used to be. You can’t even safely access it. You can walk to the left or right of the building to get to the field behind. There’s a huge hole right in the main walk and large roots which stick up (and have tripped me up many times.”

Ellinger, who grew up in the area, speaks with nostalgia about play spaces of times past. “It was very different at one time. There were basketball hoops where police and maintenance equipment now sit, their use was encouraged at one time. The firefighters would sometimes play basketball games with the kids that would hang around. Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops used that building where the firehouse is. There was a pool, play equipment to climb on, but as they were taken down or pulled out, they were hardly ever replaced and much of the equipment there is stuff that is sort of dangerous. The metal slide has been there since I was a kid, there’s no layer of protection underneath - just packed dirt.”

“The library does not have enough parking,” continues Ellinger. “They want families to trek with baseball gear and strollers and kids all the way from down near the water, where the dump road is, up to the field,” she says referring to proposed parking off of Frog Hollow Road. “That’s just so unrealistic.”

“The town has just become less friendly and welcoming with more signs

telling people where they’re not allowed to be,” says Ellinger. “Woronoco doesn’t have a park either. There was a community center across from mill 2, but it burned down and was never rebuilt.”

The sentiments of Russell residents in respect to play spaces are echoed in Huntington. A town committee launched a survey this past summer to drive a new Open Space and Recreation Plan. Town residents were asked (with the help of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission) about what facilities for recreation they would like to see. “The biggest thing that came out of the survey and visioning session with the community was the need for a playground in the center of town,” says Mimi Kaplan, senior land use and environment planner at the organization. “There is a decent sized population of families with kids in the center of Huntington. They want kids to be able to bike to school and walk to a future playground safely. There is a lack of access and it’s hard for them to get there on their own safely.”

What would Ellinger and other local parents like to see? “If Russell cleaned up and fixed the ‘park’ beyond the library before they took away the other one it wouldn’t be so upsetting, but the culture is changing; it’s like families are being discouraged from living here. There’s barely any kids at the schools, there’s no place to play, they’re not welcome in many of those places.”

## Library lists upcoming events

RUSSELL – The Russell Public Library, 162 Main St., is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 3-7 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m./ -1 p.m.

The library will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24; Wednesday, Dec. 25; Tuesday, Dec. 3 and Wednesday, Jan. 1. People are encouraged to check out StoryWalks® sponsored by the Hilltown Family Center at the Noble View Outdoor Center, All Person’s Trail and behind the Russell Public Library around the Community fruit trees and play area.

The Russell Public Library will be joining the CWMARS Library System in early 2025. People may stop by the library in December to sign up for a new library card and enter their name in the gift certificate raffle. The library will also be launching a new Library Website and Instagram in December.

The library will have their massive Lego collection with the Bric It, with building plans available on Tuesday, Dec. 24 from 10 a.m.-noon. On Thursday, Dec. 26th from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. the library will have materials available for Cardboard Architecture.

## Two car accident cause under investigation

By Mary Kronholm  
Correspondent

RUSSELL – Trooper Brandon Doherty of the Massachusetts State Police Office of Media Relations provided the following information on last week’s Thursday night accident.

On Thursday Dec. 12 at 6:15 p.m., State Police Russell Troopers were dispatched to the area of 959 Blandford Road, Route 23 in Russell for a two-vehicle head on crash.

Arriving at the scene, Troopers came upon a gray Audi A5 off the roadway on the left side going east with severe damage to the front driver side.

All three occupants of that vehicle had exited and appeared to have minimal non-life-threatening injuries.

A second vehicle involved, was a white Dodge Caliber, which had come to rest on its roof in the east-bound, downhill side of the road. The operator of the Dodge, a 24-year-old Westfield man, was still inside of the vehicle and a passenger was partially ejected but suffering serious injuries. The female passenger of the Dodge was transported to Strathmore Park by ambulance then flown to Baystate Hospital. The driver of the Dodge was transported to Baystate Hospital by ambulance.

All three occupants of the Audi

refused transport to a medical facility.

After the injured parties were treated and transported, the scene was secured. Prior to the collision, for reasons still under investigation, the Dodge crossed the double yellow line and collided with the Audi. The operator of the Dodge was issued a citation. Both vehicles were totaled and towed from the scene.

According to Trooper Doherty the cause of the accident is still under investigation.

Russell Police Chief Kevin Hennessy said Russell officers were dispatched to the scene as well and assisted the State Police.



The Dodge Caliber came to rest on its roof in the downhill right-hand lane of Route 23 having crossed the line and hitting another vehicle. Passengers were pinned inside the car.



The Audi A5 was driving up Route 23 when it was hit by the Dodge. Driver and passengers did not sustain critical injuries.

*Turley photos by Mary Kronholm*

## CHESTERFIELD

# Students shop at school Holiday Bazaar

CHESTERFIELD – On Friday, Dec 13 at New Hingham Elementary School in Chesterfield, the children darted about the gym with the excitement of the holidays and quarters in their pocket.

At the school's Holiday Bazaar hosted by the Parent Teacher Organization and president Kim Lyons Snape, the children were able to buy things for their family from tables organized by item type. Parents had created this new spin on a white elephant event back in 1998 when the school building was new. Each year they donate items they don't need that might just make the perfect gift for another family.

It was clear from the event that kids love to gift as much as their parents do. When a child spotted a "must have" item for mom, dad, siblings or even the family

dog they picked it up and paid a parent volunteer with a quarter.

Kimberly Messick, a parent on the PTO who was helping organize said that "a student bought a gift to a volunteer that had a cardinal on it because recently her great grandmother had died. She said she saw a cardinal on the way to school and she knew that was the gift she needed to get her dad."

With their shopping done, the children headed into another room where parents and teachers showed them how to wrap the gifts and write tags. "I was at the 'breakable table' wrapping things and oh, gosh, so many items went to grandparents," says Messick. "But I think one of my favorites was a 2nd grader saying 'I needed the oldest thing on this table – my stepdad likes antique stuff.'"



New Hingham Elementary School students use quarters to buy gifts for family.

Turley Photos by Kathryn Koegel



Hampshire Region school superintendent Dr. Vito Perrone shows a student how to wrap gifts.



Event organizer from the New Hingham PTO Kimberly Messick and her son pose for a photo.



New Hingham Elementary School Principal Amanda Faro is shown with students at the school's Holiday Bazaar.

## PITTSFIELD

# Pittsfield receives Clean Water Trust grant

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Clean Water Trust's (the Trust) Board of Trustees approved \$60,492,784 in new low-interest loans and grants at its meeting on Aug. 7, 2024.

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 commu-

nities. 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.

Pittsfield received \$445,104 in Lead Service Line Planning Grant. For more information on the different loan programs, people may visit the programs page at <https://www.mass.gov/programs>.

Since its establishment in 1989, the Trust has loaned nearly \$8.6 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.

## FLORENCE

# Florence Bank hires Parnell as Vice President/Credit Mgr.

FLORENCE – Florence Bank has hired Meghan Parnell of Holyoke to serve as vice president/credit manager in the Commercial Lending department.

She will lead her team in the analysis of existing and proposed commercial loans and commercial loan portfolio management and assist the senior management team with loan policy, budgeting, strategic planning and external support systems.

Skilled in commercial credit and lending, financial analysis, team leadership, process improvement and digital



Meghan Parnell

strategy, Parnell has served as a chief lending officer, senior financial product manager, business lending manager and commercial credit officer.

She holds an associate degree in mathematics from Holyoke Community College and a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

In the community, Parnell has served Family Outreach of Amherst, the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce, Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School and Holyoke Community

College Foundation, as treasurer. She was named a BusinessWest 40 Under 40 in 2014.

"With her 24 years of experience in the industry and a broad range of skills and experience, we are confident that Meghan will work well with our commercial lending team in nurturing commercial relationships," said President and CEO Matt Garrity.

Florence Bank is a mutual savings bank chartered in 1873. Currently, the bank serves the Pioneer Valley through 12 full-service branch locations in Florence, Northampton, Easthampton, Williamsburg, Amherst, Hadley, Belchertown, Granby, Chicopee, West Springfield, and Springfield.

# Chesterfield man killed in snowmobile crash Dec. 8

CHESTERFIELD – A Chesterfield man died early Sunday morning, Dec. 8, when the snowmobile he was riding crashed into a tree near Smith Road in Chesterfield.

First responders were called to the site around 1:30 a.m., where Derek Graves, 37, sustained critical injuries in the crash. A friend who was snowmobiling behind Graves called 911 when he came upon the crash. Graves was transported by ambulance to Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, where he later died.

State Police Detectives assigned to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, Chesterfield Police, State Police troopers from the Crime Scene Services Section and the Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section and the Massachusetts Environmental Police were at the scene of the crash.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death. The accident remains under investigation.

Criminal charges are based on probable cause to believe a person has committed a crime. All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in court.



# HILLTOWN HIKING ADVENTURES



Russ looks down below the bridge. People can see the old railroad as it connects to the Boston and Albany Railroad.

## Hikers follow the Chester and Becket Railroad

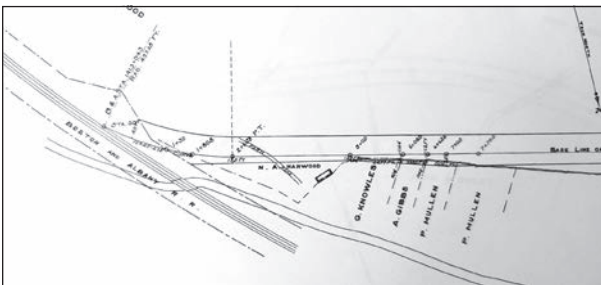
CHESTER – It is not your ordinary bridge traveling into Chester West on Route 20; they drive over the Chester and Becket Railroad, the five-mile spur built in 1898 to bring granite from the quarries in Becket to the finishing sheds in Chester.

This is now the Hilltown Hikers historic Chester Granite and Polishing Works property. The CBRR joined the Boston and Albany Railroad main line through a box culvert under Route 20 near where Baystate Drive turns off. The culvert was built in 1930, part of a Route 20 upgrade project and only one train ever passed beneath it. The CBRR was abandoned on Jan. 13, 1931.

People may learn more about this railroad at the Amherst Railway Hobby Show at the Big E fairgrounds in West Springfield on Saturday, Jan. 25 and Sunday, Jan. 26 at their booth in the Better Living Center.



This photo shows the other end of the box culvert under Route 20.



Above, the Chester and Becket Railroad survey map shows where it joined the Boston and Albany Railroad. Right, this is plan of the Chester and Becket Railroad map and its joining with the Boston and Albany Railroad.



This is a view of the box culvert under Route 20.

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USDA INSP. FRESH HOLIDAY ROAST BONELESS PORK LOIN WITH HAM, CHEESE, PEPPERS, OLIVES, SPICES..... <b>\$4<sup>49</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TENDERLOIN CUT FREE <b>\$10<sup>89</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN CAPONS ..... <b>\$5<sup>99</sup></b> lb
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USDA INSP. STORE MADE ITALIAN SAUSAGE ALL VARIETIES ..... <b>\$2<sup>79</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LEG LAMB <b>\$5<sup>99</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN SOUTHERN PECAN PIE 23 OZ..... <b>\$4<sup>99</sup></b> ea
USDA INSP. KAYEM BUDDABALL SMOKED PIT HAM BONELESS WHOLE..... <b>\$3<sup>66</sup></b> lb	FROZEN IMPORTED LEG RACKS <b>\$14<sup>99</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICOPEE PROVISIONS BLUE SEAL KIELBASA ..... <b>\$4<sup>99</sup></b> lb
USDA INSP. HATFIELD OLD TIME SKINLESS SHANKLESS HARDWOOD SMOKED WHOLE HAM ..... <b>\$2<sup>89</sup></b> lb	<b>SALE DATES: 12/19/24-12/24/24 OPEN: 12/22 SUNDAY 8AM-1PM</b>	USDA INSP. FROZEN BREADED MOZZARELLA STICKS BREADED 2LB BAG..... <b>\$6<sup>99</sup></b> ea
USDA INSP. FROZEN COOK'S HAM PORTIONS BUTT & SHANK <b>\$1<sup>49</sup></b> lb	<b>90 Meat Outlet</b>	USDA INSP. FROZEN BACON WRAPPED SHRIMP 15 COUNT ..... <b>\$8<sup>99</sup></b> ea
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONELESS DINNER HAM AVERAGE 5 LB <b>\$1<sup>99</sup></b> lb	<b>HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4 Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3</b>	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN HADDOCK FILLETS ..... <b>\$5<sup>99</sup></b> lb
	<b>merry christmas</b>	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 16/20 COUNT 2 LB BAG..... <b>\$19<sup>99</sup></b> ea

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# WESTHAMPTON

## Westhampton Public Library lists upcoming events

**WESTHAMPTON** – The Westhampton Public Library, 1 North Road, will be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1 and Monday, Jan. 20, 2025.

Library hours are Monday and Thursday 2-8 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

To place a request for curbside pickup, patrons may email [westhampton@cwmar.org](mailto:westhampton@cwmar.org) or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring programs (holidays may impact schedule) are computer classes with Bob Miller the second and fourth Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon, knitting group Mondays at 6 p.m. and Yoga Mondays at 6 p.m.

Yoga is drop-in, first-come/first-served and registration is not required. People should check Facebook and the town calendar for updates on yoga at the library.

Scrabble Group meets Tuesdays at 2 p.m. and the Book Group usually meets the fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m., but they will be meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 7 from 7-8 p.m. to accommodate the

holidays. This month's book group title is "Remarkably Bright Creatures" the best-selling debut novel by Shelly Van Pelt. It's a lovely story about grief and unlikely friendship that is partially narrated by a Giant Pacific octopus named Marcellus. People may pick up a copy at the library.

Walk-in Wellness Clinics with Westhampton's Public Health Nurse are the first and third Wednesdays from 10-11:30 a.m. Coffee & Chat meets Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-noon.

CFCE Playgroup meets Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Story time is Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. There will be a fun activity every Thursday this month after school at 3:30 p.m. LEGO Club meets the first Thursday, Craft Club second Thursday, Nintendo Switch Happy Hour third Thursday, Comics Club fourth Thursday and Board Games fifth Thursday

Teen Craft Night will meet Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6p.m. Materials are limited to eight participants and registration is required. Teens should register by emailing Emily at [ewayne@cwmar.org](mailto:ewayne@cwmar.org).

org. Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring all teen crafts.

Artists from the Art Always Studio in Florence will be exhibiting their work for the months of December and January, 2025 at the Westhampton Library. The artists, from two different classes, have been painting together with their instructor Lindsay Fogg-Willets and will exhibit paintings done in class of various subjects and mediums.

Adventures in Generative Artificial Intelligence will be held Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025 from 6-7:30 p.m.

Participants will learn about the definition of "artificial intelligence, how it works, its implications for society and ethics and engage in hands-on exploration." This program will be presented by R. Jordan Crouser, Pablo Frank Bolton, & Nicholas R. Howe from the Department of Computer Science at Smith College.

A Death Café will meet Thursday,

Jan. 23, 2025 from 6-7:30 p.m. A Death Café is an informal opportunity to talk about death with cake. People often keep talk about death at arm's length and it has become almost taboo. But it's a part of life that everyone faces through loved ones, pets and ultimately as part of our own journey.

There is no pre-set agenda, and no presentation when using the Death Café model. It's simply a time to come together in a comfortable space, share refreshments, and talk about death, with the topics arising from the group gathered. You are welcome to come talk or just be present. While it is not a question-and-answer session, there will be some takeaway information and follow up available. Recommended for adults of all ages.

Chris LaFond is a certified Death Midwife who loves talking about death and getting others to talk about it, too. He is available for consultations about advance planning, spiritual counseling, home services, clergy services and more.

## OTIS

### COA SPONSORS WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP



Tammy Taverna of Flowers by Webster, florists in Westfield, conducted a floral program for wreath making Wednesday, Dec. 11 at the Council on Aging Senior Center at Otis Town Hall. Here she watches Mimi Crandal and Betsy Matarazzo as they work on their arrangements.

*Photos by Karen Yvon*



Diane Dubiel had another idea for her wreath.

## Selectmen announce vacancies

OTIS – Selectmen announce there are vacancies for appointed positions: Animal Control/Animal Inspector and Town of Otis Revitalization Committee.

Anyone interested in applying can

submit an application to the Board of Selectmen at [townadmin@townofotisma.com](mailto:townadmin@townofotisma.com). Applications can be found by visiting the town website at [www.townofotisma.com](http://www.townofotisma.com).

## Free ski days offered for residents

OTIS – Full time Otis residents ski free on Saturday, Jan. 11 and Saturday, Feb. 22, night or day, at Otis Ridge Ski Area.

Residents should bring proof of full-

time residents (drivers Licenses).

For more information, they may call the Otis Town Hall at 413-269-0100, Extension 129 or email [healthdept@townofotisma.com](mailto:healthdept@townofotisma.com).

## BLUES

*from page 1*

playing by ear and watching the fingering on a guitar. If familiar with the phrase, "hum a few bars," performers and audience alike have it all figured out. Everyone of all musical abilities is welcome.

Most of the musicians who performed on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 15, knew each other and some were regulars who participate every month or so. The three hours from 2-5 p.m. flew by with the varied tunes and players. And it's not always Blues, sometimes there's a Rock 'n' Roll or Country tune.

Blandford's Ron Henrichon is one of the regulars. "I live just a few miles down the road," he said. He combined vocals with his guitar playing and called Birdman with his amplified harmonica and Randy on guitar with Chuck on an electronic sax.

Some of the musicians tapped a toe to keep time, some nodded their head or kept the beat with a heel hitting the floor.

Some folks danced. The Hilltown Blues Jam, now well into its second year, is something fun and different and close by.



Jamie shows off a classic riff.



Birdman performs on his amplified harmonica.



Randy and Donna Tougas of Westfield are jam regulars. Donna is a fan.

*Turley photos by Mary Kronholm*

# CHESTER

## Town of Chester adopts 2025 buy recycle policy

CHESTER – The town of Chester recognizes the need to make more efficient use of natural resources, create markets for the material collected in recycling programs, reduce solid waste volume and disposal costs and serve as a model for private and public institutions.

Chester is committed to purchasing products which are environmentally preferable and or made of recycled materials whenever such products meet quality requirements and are available at reasonable price and terms. Chester supports recycling.

To the maximum extent practicable the following standards should be adhered to: For all purchases of printing and writing paper for in-house use or custom printed materials by professional printers, including copier paper, offset paper, forms, stationary, envel-

ops, notepads and file folders, the minimum content standards shall be no less than 30% post-consumer recycled material to meet the current state and federal minimum standards.

Town departments shall ensure that all contracts for printing require the inclusion of an imprint identifying the recycled content of the paper whenever practicable, along with the recycling symbol.

Each department shall implement paper reduction techniques through the use of duplexing, sharing, and circulating materials, use of electronic mail, and reuse of discarded paper for draft works, scrap paper and internal messages.

To find out if people are recycling the right way they may visit <https://www.recyclesmartma.org>.

## Library holds holiday event

CHESTER – Hamilton Memorial Library, 195 West Main St., offers a drop in holiday craft for children on Saturday, Dec. 21 from 10 a.m.-noon.

Children may enjoy a doughnut and hot cocoa while creating a holi-

day craft. The library will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24 and Wednesday, Dec. 25 for Christmas. They will have alternate hours on Tuesday, New Year's Eve from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and will be closed on New Years Day, Jan. 1, 2025.

## Chester announces Hazard Mitigation Plan

CHESTER – The Town of Chester recognizes the threat natural hazards pose to people and property within the town.

The town has prepared a multi-hazard mitigation plan, hereby known as Town of Chester Hazard Mitigation Plan Update in accordance with federal laws including the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended; the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended; and the National Dam Safety Program Act, as amended.

This plan identifies mitigation goals and actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property in the town of Chester from the impacts of future hazards and disasters and

adoption by the Town of Chester Select Board demonstrates its commitment to hazard mitigation and achieving the goals outlined in the Hazard mitigation /plan update.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, the Town of Chester Select Board adopts the town of Chester Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. While content related to the town of Chester may require revisions to meet the plan approval requirements, changes occurring after adoption will not require the town of Chester to re-adopt any further iterations of the plan. Subsequent plan updates following the approval period for this plan will require separate adoption resolutions.

## Church lists Christmas services

CHESTER – The Chester Baptist Church, 14 Middlefield Road, across from the Chester Town Hall, invites the community to attend special Christmas services on Sunday, Dec. 22 at 9:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. and Monday, Dec. 23 at 6:30 p.m.

On Sunday at 9:45a.m. and 10:45a.m. there will be a special Christmas

services centered on the theme of the birth of Christ followed by a delicious Christmas dinner at noon. A candlelight service will be held on Monday at 6:30 p.m. followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments.

People may email Pastor Dan at [pastor@chesterbaptistchurch.org](mailto:pastor@chesterbaptistchurch.org) or call 413-668-7768 with any questions.

## Hilltown Hikers and DCR to hold first day hike Jan. 1

CHESTER – On Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025 at 10 a.m. hikers should meet at Sanderson Brook Falls.

They should park at the Sanderson Brook Falls lot on Route 20 across from Bannish Lumber in Chester.

From Northampton take Route 66 to Route 112 Huntington, take a left on Route 20 East to Russell, Chester Blandford State Forest will be on the right. There is a Sanderson Brook Falls sign out front, Bannish Lumber is across the road for overflow parking.

The hike is easy to moderate with some uneven footing, two miles in and back. The spur trail to the waterfall slopes downward and is single track. Crampons/walking sticks recommended

if there is snow/ice.

Celebrate the New Year 2025 outdoors with the Hilltown Hikers and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and join the nationwide initiative led by America's State Parks to encourage people to get outdoors. On New Year's Day, hundreds of free, guided hikes will be organized in all 50 states. Hikers across America will be participating in First Day Hikes and enjoying the beauty of a state park. Last year nearly 55,000 people rang in the New Year, hiking over 133,000 miles throughout the country.

The Chester Blandford State Forest includes remnants of small mining operations and the 60-foot cascade at

Sanderson Brook Falls. The state forest was established in 1924 when local lumber companies sold the land to the state. The trail is a wide gravel road, which gently climbs upward. They will cross three girder bridges, which are dog friendly and follow along Sanderson Brook then take the more narrow trail to the right, which leads to the bottom of the waterfall. The group will hike rain or shine. Registration is required. Participants should be prepared for winter conditions; snow and ice gear recommended.

People should register per car load by visiting <https://westernmasshilltownhikers.ticketleap.com>. Maps and bottled water are provided. Well behaved dogs

are allowed. The event is volunteer lead. Suggested donation is \$15.

More details are available by visiting [www.hilltownhikers.com](http://www.hilltownhikers.com). People, who have questions, may email [westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com](mailto:westernmasshilltownhikers@aol.com) or call/text 413-302-0312. As always hikers should be prepared for rocks, mud and roots and bring trekking poles.

For those who want to hike every weekend year-round become a Hilltown Hiker member. People can sign up by visiting [www.hilltownhikers.com](http://www.hilltownhikers.com).

Tees, hoodies, hats, patches and photos will be for sale by donation at the event. People are reminded to keep the beautiful places clean and carry in and carry out.

# MONTGOMERY

## Grace Hall Library lists upcoming news, events

MONTGOMERY – If the Gateway Regional School District closes due to bad weather, the Grace Hall Library, 161 Main Road, will be closed, too.

The library will close early on Christmas Eve Tuesday, Dec. 24 and on New Year's Eve, Tuesday, Dec. 31 at 3 p.m. both days. Regular library hours are Tuesday from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Thursday from 4-8 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Cookbook Book Club will meet Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. They will set New Year, new goals, and new recipes for the New Year to kick off 2025 with a healthy eating theme.

People may check out one of the

healthy cookbooks available at the library, pick a recipe, try it and bring a dish to share with the group. This is a fun, relaxed way to stay on track with your resolutions and discover delicious new meals.

Stop the Bleed class will take place Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. library. The Hilltown Community Ambulance is coming to the library to teach a Stop the Bleed class. Participants will learn hands-on skills to handle life-threatening bleeding during emergencies, whether it's an accident or something unexpected. They should sign up by Tuesday, Jan. 21 by either stopping by the library or calling 413-862-3894 to reserve a spot.

# Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

### 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.

### HELP WANTED

The Huntington Food Pantry is looking for a **part-time worker**, 8-10 hours week. Must be able to lift 50 lbs, be available on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, and full-day Thursdays. We are also looking a **part-time driver**, 6-7 hours per week. Applicants must be able to lift 60 lbs and be available in the mornings Monday through Wednesday. A DOT physical must be passed to drive our pantry's box truck. *The two positions can be merged into a single role if the candidate is interested.*

Join our team as we serve our community together!

Please inquire at **413-667-3196** or email [huntingtonfoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:huntingtonfoodpantry@gmail.com).



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## OBITUARY

### Ann (Ban) Strickland Merritt, 82

On the night of Dec. 11, 2024, Ann (Ban) Strickland Merritt, age 82, died peacefully at an assisted living community in Agawam, surrounded and/or visited by her close family.

"A woman who is the head of a family or tribe" is the Oxford dictionary definition of a matriarch. Anyone who knew Ann wouldn't think twice of this truth. Ann was born to Robert and Grace Strickland on March 15, 1942, in Westfield, however she resided in Huntington and Russell during her lifetime.

In the early 1960s, she met Ronald Merritt of Huntington, marrying in 1963. They went on to have two children, Randy and Brett Merritt. They were married a total of 61 years.

Ann graduated from Westfield High School in 1960. After high school graduation, she attended and graduated from Marietta College in Ohio, with a BA in English. She then attended Westfield State to obtain a MA degree in reading, which kickstarted her career as an English and Reading teacher at Chicopee High School and Putnam High School.

Ann was dedicated to her community, serving her church, Gateway School Committee, Russell Public Library and Town of Russell Planning Board. Her activity in the Russell Community Church included



working with Youth Groups and supporting any events necessary. Ann and family spent some time in the Grand Canyon (1973-74), volunteering with the National Park Service at Grand Canyon National Park and becoming friendly with the Native Hopi community. Many people reflected on the fact that when she went somewhere, she easily immersed herself into the fabric of that community, creating the sense that she lived there her whole life. Her hobbies included sewing, quilting, singing, painting, reading and writing.

Surviving family members include: her husband, Ron Merritt; sisters-in-law, Lillian Merritt and Christine Zappacosta, her brother, Donnie Strickland and his wife Elise Strickland; her sons, Randy and Brett Merritt and her daughters-in-law Sherri and Kim Merritt. Her grand-children are Jourdan Radville, Christopher Merritt, Chelsea Merritt and Jake Merritt. Her nieces and nephew are Susie Seawell, Elizabeth Edwards and Robert Strickland. Special mention to her four great-grand children- Fiona and Hazel Merritt and Opal and Arlo Radville.

There will be no calling hours, and interment will be private at the discretion of the family. Anyone wishing to remember Ann (Ban) can carry on her community based legacy, by loving thy neighbor as thyself.

## DEATH NOTICE

### MERRITT, ANN (BAN) STRICTLAND

Died Dec. 11, 2024

No calling hours.

Interment will be private at discretion of the family

Country Journal

## OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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

## NORTHAMPTON

### Bariatric program earns National Accreditation

NORTHAMPTON – The Cooley Dickinson Hospital Bariatric and Weight Management program has earned accreditation as a "Comprehensive Center" by the American College of Surgeons and the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program.

The accreditation, a first for Cooley Dickinson, ensures that weight loss surgery patients are receiving care at a nationally accredited program that meets the highest standards of patient safety and quality. MSBAQIP accreditation is a joint program of the American College of Surgeons and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery.

"A tremendous amount of work went into earning this accreditation," said bariatric surgeon Dr. Ursula McMillian, who pioneered the bariatric program at Cooley Dickinson in 2021. "We are thrilled our team has reached this milestone. Our program is unique in that it focuses on encouraging and teaching patients about moderate exercise, along with weight loss surgery, as a means to maintain long-term success with weight loss."

To earn MBSAQIP accreditation, Cooley Dickinson Hospital met essential criteria for staffing, training, facili-

ty infrastructure, and patient care. The standards ensure that accredited programs offer bariatric surgical patients a multidisciplinary program, not just a surgical procedure, which improves patient outcomes and long-term success.

"Preparing for the accreditation and going through the day-long site visit involved the efforts of so many people," said Dr. McMillian. "I am fortunate to be part of an extremely dedicated team that truly cares about our patients and wants the best for them as they seek to overcome challenges with obesity."

Dr. McMillian points to two colleagues, bariatric dietitian and program coordinator Rebecca Rand and practice manager Rebecca Masi, who she says have gone above and beyond to build the program from the ground up.

Immediately following the accreditation site visit in August, Dr. McMillian noted that the "surveyor was impressed with our small program and indicated there were no deficiencies or changes needed to how the program is run."

Cooley Dickinson's multidisciplinary bariatrics and weight management team provides patients with advanced and comprehensive care, including pre-surgery evaluation, nutrition education and lifestyle modifica-

tion. After surgery, patients are provided with unlimited ongoing guidance and support.

Cooley Dickinson's Bariatric and Weight Management team is led Dr. McMillian, alongside Rand and Masi; nurse practitioner Sofia Buford; psychiatric nurse practitioner Kelly Buckley and medical assistant Kelly Galindez.

In the United States, approximately 15.5 million people suffer from severe obesity, according to the National Institutes of Health, with numbers continuing to rise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity is a common, serious, and costly disease. While obesity is often caused by poor eating and lack of exercise, it can also be impacted by underlying medical conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, and genetics.

People may visit [www.cooley-dickinson.org/programs-services/surgery/general-surgical-care/bariatric-and-weight-management-program/](http://www.cooley-dickinson.org/programs-services/surgery/general-surgical-care/bariatric-and-weight-management-program/) for more information.

Cooley Dickinson Hospital 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.

### Forbes Memorial Library lists December events

NORTHAMPTON – Forbes Memorial Library, 20 West St., will be closed Tuesday, Dec. 24 and Wednesday, Dec. 25 and Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025.

The Kids' Gaming Club will meet Friday, Dec. 20 from 4-5 p.m. for ages 7-12 in the Community Room. They can hang out with other young gamers and play the library's Nintendo Switch. They generally play Super Smash Bros., Mario Kart 8, Super Mario: Wonder and Mario Party.

For teens ages 12 and up, the Teen Gaming Lounge is available on Tuesdays. A Family Cookie Decorating Party will be held Saturday, Dec. 21 from 1-2 p.m. in the Community Room. This program is intended for families with children ages three plus.

Florence Bank customers can help the Friends of Forbes win a Customer's Choice Community Grant from Florence Bank with a simple vote by Tuesday, Dec. 31. Florence Bank is donating \$100,000 to local non-profit organizations with their Annual Customers' Choice Community Grants Program and their customers decide who gets the money.

The Department of Health and Human Services announces the launch of a comprehensive community survey as part of the Healthier Northampton initiative. Healthier Northampton seeks to enhance health outcomes and address the diverse needs of all Northampton residents. The community survey is a crucial opportunity for residents to share their health concerns and priorities in order to shape future health programs and services.

The Department of Health has set a goal to reach 5,000 Northampton residents with this survey. The survey is available in English and Spanish and can be accessed on the DHHS website or at the following link: <https://bit.ly/hamphealth>. All participants who wish to be entered into the raffle have a chance to win \$100. "People may also pick up printed surveys and flyers by the self checkouts and the Reference printer at the library.

## STOCKBRIDGE

### Berkshire Lyric presents Christmas concert

STOCKBRIDGE – On Saturday Dec. 21 at 3 p.m., Berkshire Lyric presents "The Very Best Time of the Year" at the Stockbridge Congregational Church, 4 Main St.

The concert of traditional and contemporary carols will also include a number of well known standards from

the American holiday songbook with many opportunities to sing along with the massed 100 singers. Santa will also make an appearance at this old-fashioned holiday event geared for children of all ages. The Lyric Children's Chorus will be joined by two ensembles for young singers, Melodious Accord and the Lyric

Children's Chorus. Tickets are \$20 with children 18 and under admitted for free thanks to the support of The Red Lion Inn.

For further information, people may visit [www.BerkshireLyric.org](http://www.BerkshireLyric.org) or to purchase tickets visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/berkshire-lyric-47947478253>.

**Early Deadlines!** for all LEGAL NOTICES...

Happy Holidays!

All Papers Will Deadline  
Thursday, Dec. 19  
at Noon for Publication  
Dec. 23-27

All Papers Will Deadline  
Friday, Dec. 27  
at Noon for Publication  
Dec. 30-Jan. 3

Happy New Year!

PLEASE RECYCLE  
THIS NEWSPAPER

# BECKET

## Art Center to hold sing-along

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will host a holiday sing-along on Saturday, Dec. 21, at 5 p.m.

Local musicians Dave Bacon, Jeff Forget and Katie Grey will lead the audience in seasonal favorites; song

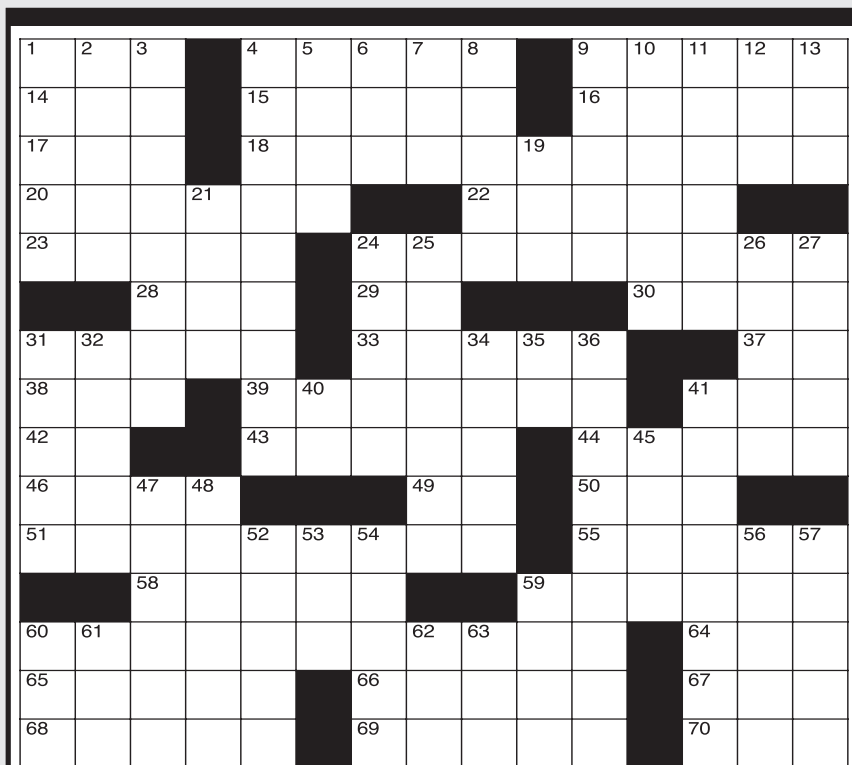
books will be available. All are invited to bring along their voices, their instruments and, if possible, a dish to share. Coffee, tea and hot cocoa will be provided. The event is free; donations are welcome. For more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).

## Holiday readings happen Dec. 20

BECKET – The Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Road, will present an evening of holiday readings of two treasured American stories on Friday, Dec. 20 at 5 p.m.

Three professional actors, Paula Langton, Jim Petosa and Ryan Winkles, will present Truman Capote's "The Thanksgiving Visitor" and "A Christmas

Memory." Though the author is not known for lyrical and heartfelt writing, these tales, recalling the deep connection between the young Capote and his spinster aunt, make for a perfect evening of storytelling. Tickets are \$10 and free for members. For registration and more information, people may visit [becketartscenter.org](http://becketartscenter.org).



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Miller beer variety
- 4. Member of people inhabiting Bering Sea islands
- 9. Stomach
- 14. Investment vehicle
- 15. Fictional soccer coach Ted
- 16. Irregular in botanical parlance
- 17. Cease standing
- 18. "American Horror Story" actress
- 20. Grow milk teeth
- 22. Plant parts
- 23. Snow house
- 24. Most contemptuous
- 28. Note to repay
- 29. Old English
- 30. Wings
- 31. Financial institutions
- 33. Parks and Lopez are two
- 37. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
- 38. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 39. Give off
- 41. Semitic alphabet letter
- 42. Farm state
- 43. Actress Sarandon
- 44. Back parts
- 46. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- 49. Touchdown
- 50. One point north of due east
- 51. Refurbishes
- 55. Silver and Dogg are two
- 58. Former Tigers catcher Alex
- 59. Type of envelope
- 60. Seriously considered
- 64. Unhappy
- 65. Past (archaic)
- 66. Asian wild dog
- 67. Old English letter
- 68. Young domestic sheep
- 69. Football players need to gain them

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Dormant Peruvian volcano
- 2. Norwegian composer
- 3. Indicates location
- 4. Pubs
- 5. Unable to walk easily
- 6. Electronic warfare-support measures
- 7. World leader
- 8. Midsection
- 9. Jewish calendar month
- 10. Urological condition
- 11. A small quantity of anything
- 12. Mountain Time
- 13. Affirmative
- 19. Word element meaning ear
- 21. Carried away
- 24. Short-billed rails
- 25. Newborn child
- 26. Sword
- 27. Groups of people
- 31. Prickly, scrambling shrubs
- 32. Become less intense
- 34. Polishes
- 35. Indicates position
- 36. Songs sung to one's beloved
- 40. The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 41. Insects
- 45. Israeli politician
- 47. Pre-digital
- 48. Roaming
- 52. Ambience
- 53. Brew
- 54. Late
- 56. Make ecstatically happy
- 57. Semitic alphabet letter
- 59. Blend
- 60. Dash
- 61. Self
- 62. Exclamation of satisfaction
- 63. Hill or rocky peak

## THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

**ARIES**

**Mar 21/Apr 20**  
Aries, a special person in your life deserves all of your attention. Romance might be on your mind, and you'll look forward to all of the time you can spend together.

**TAURUS**

**Apr 21/May 21**  
You may feel artistically inspired this week, Taurus. Explore projects like home improvements or crafting. There are many things to try.

**GEMINI**

**May 22/June 21**  
Your attendance at a wedding or another special event could have your thoughts moving in a romantic direction, Gemini. Maybe you're thinking of taking your relationship to another level?

**CANCER**

**June 22/July 22**  
Cancer, forge ahead in your efforts if you aspire to learn a new skill or take on a different project. This might involve meeting new and interesting people. Expand your social network.

**LEO**

**July 23/Aug 23**  
Leo, it is important to put others first this week, particularly your spouse or romantic partner. You don't want any hurt feelings circulating right now.

**VIRGO**

**Aug 24/Sept 22**  
An unexpected visitor might come your way in the next few days, Virgo. This could require overhauling your schedule and even space in your home to make room.

**LIBRA**

**Sept 23/Oct 23**  
Family and friends will have a difficult time changing your mind once you have taken a stance, Libra. You have dug in your heels on this topic.

**SCORPIO**

**Oct 24/Nov 22**  
Scorpio, new work assignments or additional business may complicate matters in the days ahead. That can be great during times of year when spending can get out of control.

**SAGITTARIUS**

**Nov 23/Dec 21**  
As you prepare for the colder temperatures, holistic arts, acupuncture, herbs, and therapies might be on your mind, Sagittarius. You don't want to be sick this go-around.

**CAPRICORN**

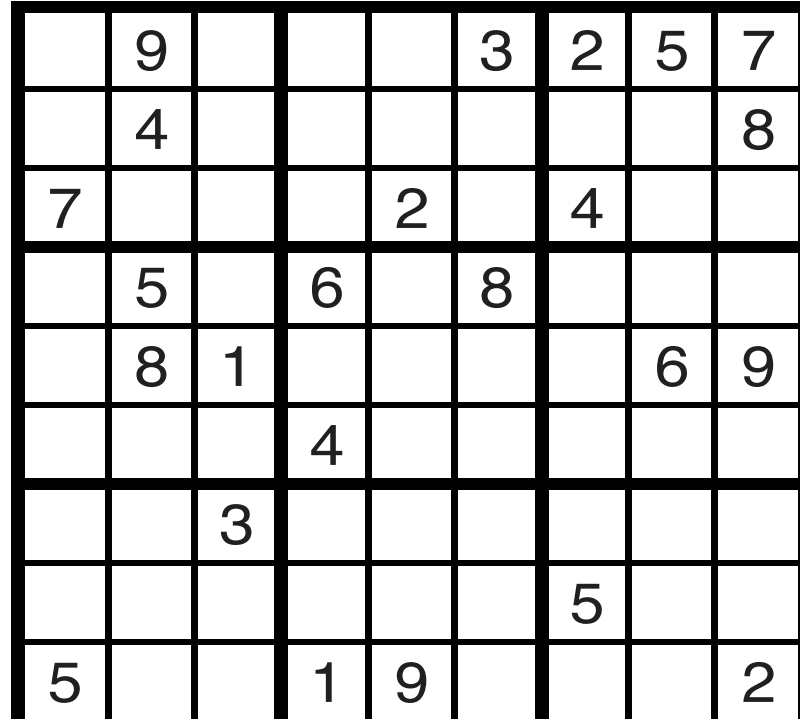
**Dec 22/Jan 20**  
Capricorn, you will try to meet the demands of your need for information this week. Chances are you'll be reading the newspaper and news outlets as much as you can.

**AQUARIUS**

**Jan 21/Feb 18**  
You cannot gain traction right now, Aquarius. Perhaps you haven't met the right people yet? Keep your eyes and ears open for new opportunities.

**PISCES**

**Feb 19/Mar 20**  
Pisces, if a career change has been on your mind, the new year might be a chance to get those gears moving in the right direction.



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**answers**

2	8	3	9	6	1	9	4	7	5
1	7	5	4	8	3	6	2	9	6
4	9	6	7	5	2	3	1	8	8
5	2	8	9	1	4	7	6	3	3
9	6	7	2	3	5	1	8	4	4
3	4	1	8	7	6	2	5	9	6
6	1	4	5	2	9	8	3	7	7
8	3	6	1	9	7	5	4	2	2
8	3	6	1	9	7	5	4	2	2
7	5	2	3	4	8	6	9	1	1

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The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest from qualified candidates to fill a part-time (six hours a week) **Administrative Assistant** position in the Town Highway Department. Duties include providing customer service, handling department's incoming and outgoing correspondence, processing payroll and maintaining records.

The pay rate range for this position is \$18.16/hour to \$26.26/hour  
A more in-depth job description can be found on the Town's website: [www.worthington-ma.us](http://www.worthington-ma.us)  
Questions will be answered by Highway Superintendent Devon Wolf - telephone number 413-685-5949. Please send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: [worthingtonhighway@gmail.com](mailto:worthingtonhighway@gmail.com) or to **Worthington Highway Department, PO Box 643, Worthington, MA, 01098.** This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled.  
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# HUNTINGTON

## RECREATION COMMITTEE HOLDS GINGERBREAD HOUSE EVENT



Bonnie Kubacki with grandson Roman, exclaimed that spending time with him was the best present ever. The organizers swept up the excess sugar and hurried off to prepare for an appearance of the red-suited man in the town gazebo.



The Huntington Recreation Committee, chaired by Vicki Mayhew, held their annual gingerbread house making event at Stanton Hall in Huntington on Saturday, Dec. 14. Sugar plums tripped off the fingers of children, their parents and grandparents. *Turley photos by Kathryn Koegel*



This was a family affair involving children, parents and grandparents.

# Hope Your Holiday Season Is **Extra-Extra Happy!**



Thanks to all of our readers and advertisers for supporting our publication and the future of local community journalism. We value our role in this community, and we're committed to keeping you current in 2025 and beyond with a focus on the local news and events that matter most to you.

**We wish you an informed and fabulous new year!**

# Country Journal

*Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns*  
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### Henry Thomas Noel

September 9, 2024

**Parents:** Dalton & Lauren Noel, Cummington

**Grandparents:** Lori Wawro, Belchertown

Mike Skowronek, Palmer

Karen Landry, Worthington

Frank Noel, Cummington