

LEYDEN LIFE

LEYDEN, MASSACHUSETTS

January 2026

Select Board

As this report is being written, the wind is howling, plummeting temperatures and bringing in the first day of winter. Although it seems that we have already had winter, there are more months ahead for enough snow to ski or snowshoe, clear ice to skate upon, to take a vacation to a warmer climate, or sit cozy and warm planning your garden. However you set out to experience the winter, may it carry you through until Spring returns.

Efficiency & Regionalization (E&R) Committee

Come hear the results of the citizen survey and the UMass Collins Center analysis of sharing the following services: administration (Administrator/Coordinator, Town Clerk) financial (Assessors, Accountant, Tax Collector, Treasurer), and Fire Departments. A combined new town is off the table. **A second public forum will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 6pm at the Farm Table Barn in Bernardston.** Bring your questions and comments, and enjoy dessert and warm beverages. The forum will also be broadcast live, and available after to view, by BNCTV.

Massachusetts PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) Commission for state-owned land has been formed to advise the Governor. The Commission will include, in addition to State legislators and department representatives, eight individuals to be appointed by the governor, who have experience in rural governance, regional planning, local public administration, environmental economics, forestry, and responsible state fiscal policy. For more information or to express interest in appointment, contact Kristen Elechko, Western Massachusetts Director, Office of the Governor at 857-327-3214 or Kristen.elechko@mass.gov

(Select Board Report, continues on page 2)

A joyous and heartfelt thank you for the kindness of all the donors who sent gifts in December:

Mike and Irene Muka	Fred and Lois Feldman
Susan Coan	Karen O'Neil
Ellen Coty	Peggy Brown and Bob Anson
Ken and Shirley Lyman	Ruth Bellows and Don Clark
Catherine Peter	Andy and Linda Baker
Neil Jones, whose generous gift is "in honor of the Johnson brothers on South County Road"	

And thanks to all the residents of Leyden for the gift of community. With best wishes, the Leyden Life editors: Cornelia Reid, Carolyn Asbury, Lisa Limont, and Annie Garvey



OFFICE HOURS

Town Office

Tuesday - Thursday 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

Select Board meetings

Mondays 9am or 5:30 pm

413-774-4111 x1

Selectboard@townofleyden.com

Town Coordinator

Tuesday through Thursday

8:30am to 4:30pm

(413) 774-4111 ext. 1

Fax: (413) 772-0146

towncoord@townofleyden.com

Town Clerk

Mondays: 3:00 - 6:00pm

To make an appointment:

townclerk@townofleyden.com

Tax Collector

Monday: 4:30 -7:30pm

To make an appointment

taxcollector@townofleyden.com

413-774-4111 ext. 4 (Leave a message)

Assessor's Office

Monday: 4:00-8:00pm

For appointment: 413-774-4111 ext. 2

Meetings: Usually 1st Monday of the month at 7:00pm

assessors@townofleyden.com

TOWN POST OFFICE ADDRESS

7 Brattleboro Road

Leyden MA 01301

"There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues."

- Hal Borland



(Select Board Report, continued from page 1)

Tax Rate and Free Cash

The Fiscal Year **2026 tax rate has been set at \$14.59 per thousand**, down from \$15.28 for the past year. Property values went up between 8-10% with total valuations rising to \$131 million, up 9.5% and a 25% rise in location factors. Property valuations are available [online](#) and tax bills based on the new valuations have been sent out. If you have any questions, please contact assessors@townofleyden.com.

Don't know what free cash is? Free is misleading, it actually comes from our town's collected revenue compared to estimates used in creating the budget, unspent money in department budget line items as of July 1, 2025, or unspent free cash from the previous year. **Leyden's free cash has been certified by the State at \$253,770** thanks to good budget management and collection of taxes. The Finance Committee and Select Board will take this into account in allocating free cash for one time, usually unanticipated expenses, funding capital projects, or replenishing reserves.

Announcements:

The Select Board wishes **to name the 8 acre conservation area** next to Avery Field that was donated to the town. Send your suggestions to selectboard3@townofleyden.com

The town is **seeking someone to shovel snow within 24 hours of a snowstorm** from the town office building, town hall and town library. It is important for safety that this get done as quickly as possible after a storm and our highway and maintenance folks are busy with roadways to get to this job quickly. For job description and pay scale, contact Town Coordinator towncoord@townofleyden.com or 413-774-4111, Ext. 1.

Franklin Regional Planning Advisory Board has been restructured and has a number of at-large seats available in addition to Leyden's representative seat held by Katherine DiMatteo. For more information, contact Jessica Atwood, JAtwood@frcog.org.

The **Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Town Report is now available**. This is our first report that covers July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. Much appreciation to George Stephan, Town Clerk, for compiling and formatting the report – it reflects well on Leyden. Thanks also to all those who contributed reports and photographs. If you would like to relive the past fiscal year or discover what town boards and committees were up to, pick up a copy at the town office or view [online](#).

Respectfully submitted,
 Jeff Baker, Katherine DiMatteo, Erica Jensen
 Leyden Select Board



Town Caucus
Monday, March 23, 2026
at 6pm



TOWN OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Select Board is still seeking volunteers for appointments for town committees, commissions and councils.
 Not on a committee yet, it's time to consider serving. There are still open seats that have not been filled, please consider stepping up for an appointment. Call or email the Town Coordinator, towncoord@townofleyden.com.

OPEN SEATS

- Agricultural Commission** – 1 position. 3-year term
- Constables** – 1 appointed position. 1-year term
- Council on Aging** – 1 position. 3-year term
- East Hill Cemetery Commission** – 2 positions. 3-year term
- Fence Viewer** – 2 positions. 1 year term
- Franklin Regional Planning Advisory Board** – 1 alternate town representative seat, 1-year term
- Mass in Motion Advisory Committee** – 2 positions. 2-year term

An abundance of gratitude for all those that volunteer!

Town Clerk

Hard to believe 2025 is over! Looking ahead to 2026, here are a few general reminders to keep in mind.

Annual Census: In January, every Leyden household will receive an annual census form listing the current household members. All household members, including children, must be included, as they are considered residents of Leyden. Your participation helps the Town maintain accurate records, supports the School Department with class projections and budgeting, ensures your voting registration remains active, verifies residency for the schools, and grants access to certain Town services.

The Annual Town Census is conducted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws and takes place in every city and town across the Commonwealth. Residents are urged to review the information, make any necessary corrections or additions, sign, and return the form in the enclosed envelope to the Town Clerk's Office as soon as possible. Detailed instructions on how to complete and return the form will be provided. The form must be signed by the head of the household as shown in the document.

Failure to return the census will result in removal from the active voter list. A confirmation card will be sent to all registered voters moved to the inactive list. To be reactivated, voters must sign and return the confirmation card.

Dog Licensing: The Leyden dog licensing period runs from **April 1st through March 31st**. All dogs six months of age and older are required to be licensed and must have a current rabies vaccination, as mandated by Massachusetts General Law. A dog license application, along with the fee schedule and instructions on how to complete and return it to the Clerk's office, will be included with the census mailing.

We urge all residents to license their dogs, as it is both the right thing to do and the law. Licenses not received by April 1st will incur a late fee for each dog.

Vote By Mail Applications: An application to vote by mail will be included in the Census mailer. If any resident wishes to receive a ballot by mail, they should complete and return the application to the Clerk's office. In 2026, in addition to the Town's Annual Election held in June, there will be a State Primary and a State Election.

Town Caucus: The Select Board, at their December 12th meeting, approved the Town Caucus for **Monday, March 23, 2026, at 6pm**. Several seats will be up for election, and a complete list will be posted online on the Clerk's webpage as well as in the next issue of *Leyden Life*.

Anyone wishing to run for office is advised to attend the caucus to be nominated. If you are unable to attend, nomination papers may be obtained from the Town Clerk anytime after the New Year. The deadline to obtain these papers from the Town Clerk is **Monday, April 13, by 5pm**. The deadline for submitting them to the Board of Registrars is **Tuesday, April 14, by 5pm**.

Annual Campaign Finance Report: All elected officials in Massachusetts are required to file their annual campaign finance report with the Town Clerk by **January 20** each year. This year-end report covers the period from the day after the last report filed through **December 31** of the previous year.

The requirement applies to all elected officials currently serving in office, regardless of whether they raised or spent campaign funds during the year. Even if no campaign activity occurred, the report must still be filed on time.

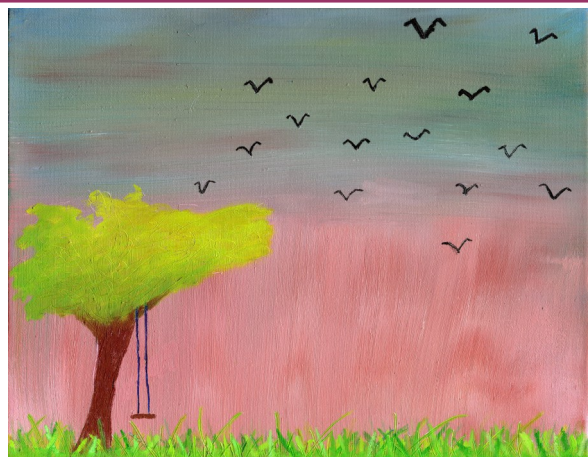
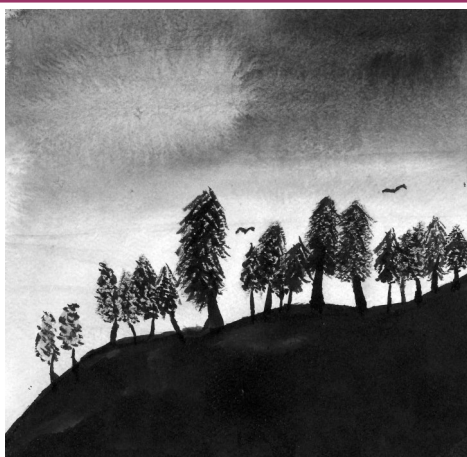
If you have any questions about which form to file, please contact the Town Clerk.

Office Hours: Public office hours continue to be Mondays from 3:00–6:00 PM at the Town Offices building. While someone is usually in the office by 9am on Mondays, please call ahead to confirm. The best way to reach us is via email at **townclerk@townofleyden.com**, as it is checked remotely. Voicemail can only be checked in the office.

George Stephan, Town Clerk



Thanks to Luz Abramson, a young Leyden artist, for sharing her work with us. You can find more examples of her creativity at luzabramson.com



Board of Health

In these troubling times, remember to take care of yourself and your family, both mentally and physically. If you need emotional support, you can call 9-8-8. It is a Lifeline if you need to talk to someone. If food insecurity is a concern, there is a food pantry at the Town Hall. Hours are limited, but if food is needed, someone will help you. *Please ask if you need help. (See page 9 for more information about the food cupboard.)*

We are still in a drought. This is the second consecutive year where we are going into winter in a drought. Please conserve your household use of water. It is not an infinite resource.

Diseases that are/were controlled with vaccines are on the rise. I urge you to consult with a medical professional if you have doubts about their efficacy. Cases of measles, whooping cough, and influenza are rising at a frightening rate. Based on the age of the individual and their health, these three health issues can cause death. Massachusetts has already had 13 influenza deaths this year. Our Federal CDC is not reliable. Please follow the guidance of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health under the leadership of Dr. Robbie Goldstein.

Smart meters. Let me stress, there is much we don't know about these meters. We do know they contain a lithium ion battery and possibly the surge protector that was present in our older analog meters, is not present in these new meters. There are 4 kinds of lithium ion batteries, with one being safer than the others. We do not know what kind of lithium ion battery is present in these new meters. We do know there are some lithium ion batteries that cause fires (computer tablets, phones, e-bikes) if they are over charged or the wrong charger is used. If the surge protector is not present anymore, a power surge (ex. a tree limb coming down on the wires) would not be stopped at the meter and sensitive electronics in your home could be damaged or destroyed. There are concerns the lithium ion battery could also be impacted with the surge. The meters are manufactured by a third party...not Eversource. We are trying to get answers to our questions. Eversource and Senator Jo Comerford have been contacted. Unfortunately, we have no choice in the installation of these meters. Please contact your state representatives. We deserve to have answers before these are installed on our homes.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you.

Happy New Year.....Stay Healthy!

Beth Kuzdeba boh@townofleyden.com 413-774-2820

Marcia Miller

Devorah Vester

LEYDEN LIFE LOWDOWN

Easy Submission

Submit by email: leydenlife@gmail.com. Attach a document, preferably in Word format. If email is not possible, call Cornelia at 774-5146. Entries must be submitted by 5:00pm on or before the 20th of the month prior to the publication month.

Distribution

To receive *Leyden Life* in digital or print form, email: leydenlife@gmail.com, or call Cornelia at 774-5146.

Thanks to all our deliverers!

Barbara Wallace, Lisa Limont, Pat Dempsey, Pat Little, Priscilla Sherman, Karen O'Neil, Marie Lovley, Carolyn Asbury, and Cornelia Reid.

Leyden Life depends entirely on donors and volunteers for its printing and delivery.

Donations are welcome.

Please make checks out to *Leyden Life*, and send to: Leyden Life, 30 West Leyden Rd., Leyden, MA 01337.

What We Are

Leyden Life is published and delivered monthly in Leyden, MA by a non-profit group of volunteers.

Editors: Carolyn Asbury, Annie Garvey, Lisa Limont, and Cornelia Reid.

DISCLAIMER

Leyden Life is not an official publication of the town, nor an official source of town business. We do our best to print accurately and distribute promptly the announcements and information we receive. Please check with the town ([townofleyden.com](http://www.townofleyden.com)) to verify information regarding town business or activities.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Listening Session. Monday, March 23rd at 6:45pm

Thank you for your incredible response to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey. The committee received 142 responses with your thoughtful ideas and suggestions which have become the foundation of our community's updated plan.

A summary of the results of the survey can be found on the Town's website at <https://www.townofleyden.com/p/24/Open-Space-and-Recreation-Committee>.

Over the past months, the committee and community volunteers have drafted goals and objectives for our ten-year plan and we would like to have your input as to whether we have captured what you believe are the most important long-range goals. The draft goals and objectives will be posted on the Town's website by **March 1st**. The Listening Session to review the goals and objectives will be held at the Town Offices immediately after the Town Caucus on Monday, March 23rd at 6:45pm. Join us for dialog about retaining and enhancing the natural resources of Leyden. Light refreshments will be served.

Pam Brown, Chair Open Space and Recreation Committee

pambrown01301@gmail.com

Fire Department

Happy New Year from the Leyden Fire Department!

A big thank you to the Leyden Highway Department for taking care of the roads so we can all get around safely, especially during the winter. Leyden is fortunate to have such a dedicated and attentive crew keeping the roads clear of snow, digging brush out of drains, and removing downed limbs. In recent weeks we have had very cold weather, snow, a blast of shockingly warm weather with a quick melt, rain, and high winds.

For the Fire Department, with every shift in the weather we are asking, "So, how will Tanker 1 behave on an icy road in *this?*" The Highway Department works hard each week so that most of us have an OK day rather than a very bad day. If some of us tend to take this for granted, that would just be further evidence that Leyden's Highway Department is doing the important work so we are free to go about our business. Stop and thank the crew if you get the opportunity to do so.

On Wednesday, December 17, Leyden Fire Department made a visit to Bernardston's Fire Department, to see their new fire station, get a tour of their trucks, and become more familiar with their crew. Leyden's Chief Carey Barton and Bernardston's Chief Peter Shedd have been discussing combined training exercises so the crews can develop teamwork.

With Leyden's Fire Department down to five members, and all of us working jobs out of town, there is an expectation that Bernardston's department will respond to fire calls with us.

We need more members to join our department and share this responsibility. The saying "many hands make light work" couldn't be more true than for the fire service. We are safer, faster, stronger, and more resilient when there is a larger crew.

Please consider joining. A willingness to learn is the most important requirement for the job. You can reach out to us at fire@townofleyden.com, or fireadmin@townofleyden.com.

Recent training/maintenance nights have included equipment checks, winterizing Squad 1, and putting the tire chains on Tanker 1 to improve winter traction.

We would like to remind you to check the street numbers for your property to be sure they are easy to read from the road, and use care in disposing of ashes from wood stoves.

Submitted by Firefighter Samantha Wood



Photo: Leyden Firefighters Matthew Muka and Corrida Thompson winterize Squad 1 during a training and maintenance night December 9, 2025 at the fire station. Photo Credit: Samantha Wood



The hiss was now becoming a roar - the whole world was a vast moving screen of snow - but even now it said peace, it said remoteness, it said cold, it said sleep."



WELLS TRUST SCHOLARSHIPS

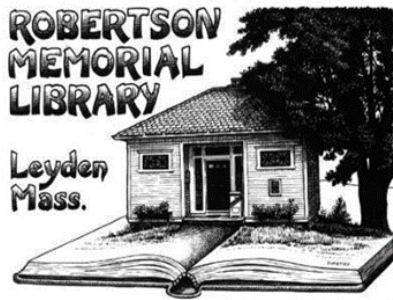
The Fred W. Wells Trust is an organization that provides scholarships to students graduating from high school who are planning to enter college or an advanced educational program and to students who are already enrolled in these programs. Recipients are selected based on scholarship, need, extracurricular activities and recommendations.

Applications may be obtained from high school college counselors, or from the town clerk during normal business hours. They may also be downloaded at wellstrustscholarship.com.

All applications, letters of recommendation and official transcripts must be postmarked on or before MARCH 20, 2026 and sent to:

Prudence Blond
Greenfield Savings Bank
400 Main Street
P.O. Box 1537
Greenfield, Ma. 01302

**For further information, please
call Lois at 774-4092**



Library Hours:

Monday 1-6 Wednesday 1-6 Saturday 10-12

"The year is done. I spread the past three hundred sixty-five days before me on the living room carpet... I fold the good days up and place them in my back pocket for safekeeping. Draw the match. Cremate the unnecessary. The light of the fire warms my toes. I pour myself a glass of warm water to cleanse myself for January. Here I go. Stronger and wiser into the new."

-from *The Sun and Her Flowers* by *Rupi Kaur*

Happy New Year! Here's to new goals, fresh starts, and—of course—new books.

2025 was a wonderful year for the library, and we're excited to see what 2026 has in store. This time of year, we're busy planning upcoming events and programs, and we want to be thoughtful stewards of both our time and our budget. We would love to hear from you—if there's a program, event, or resource you'd like to see at the library, please share your ideas with us.

The **RML Book Club** is back! Stop by the library to pick up a copy of *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt, then join us for a discussion on **January 22 at 5:30 p.m.** Please bring an appetizer to share. We'll also be choosing our next read that evening—everyone is welcome!

"The Leyden Cupboard," our community food pantry made possible by an incredible group of volunteers, is fully stocked. It is available during library hours on Mondays and Wednesdays, and by private appointment at other times by contacting Karin. At this time, donations are not needed, but we will let the community know when supplies run low.

On December 21, the library partnered with the Recreation Committee and the Leyden Fire Department to spread holiday cheer by traveling through town with Santa Claus on a fire truck. We had a wonderful time visiting so many families, and each child who signed up in advance received a brand-new book chosen just for them.

Recently, the library world lost one of its largest materials suppliers. As libraries across the country shift to new vendors, smaller libraries like ours have experienced longer wait times—some of our book orders from October are still pending. To adapt, we're being patient and creative, working closely with local booksellers to ensure our dollars go as far as possible while supporting our community.

If one of your goals for the new year is to read more, a library card is the perfect place to start! Visit cwmars.org to search the catalog and request physical items for delivery to Leyden. With Libby, you can also access eBooks and audiobooks instantly from your device. Best of all, it's all free. Be sure to check your printed receipt when you borrow— it shows just how much you saved by choosing the library.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and book-filled 2026.

Karin Parks

library@townofleyden.com

(413)773-9334

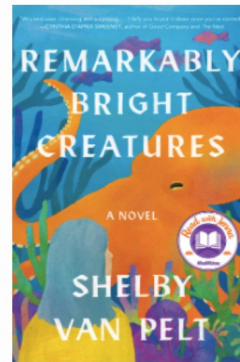


Santa visits the Pomerantz family (left) and the Yetter family (above).



Experience the joy of snowshoeing!!

Avery Field Pavilion
2 pm to 4 pm
January 18th



RML READS

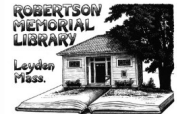


Adult Book Club

Join us for our book club discussion of Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt and bring your favorite appetizer to share. Copies of the book are available at the library.

Thursday January 22nd

5:30 PM
Leyden Town Office



Recreation Committee

Santa's Annual Visit to Leyden

By the time this edition of Leyden Life is released Santa will have toured Leyden with the assistance of the Leyden Fire Department. The Recreation Committee would like to thank Carey Barton and his crew for providing jolly old St. Nick with transport. We would also like to thank Santa and his elves for taking time out of their busy schedules to visit our little gem of a town.

Experience the Joy of Snowshoeing

On **Sunday, January 18th at 2:00**, the Recreation Committee is sponsoring a snowshoe introduction at the Avery Field Pavilion. We would like to invite interested residents to try out snowshoeing for the first time or again, if you have previous snowshoe experience. We have several pairs of snowshoes available in a range of sizes and intend to have snowshoes for children as well. Feel free to bring your own snowshoes if you have them. As this is an introduction it will not be necessary to have a lot of snow, but it would definitely be fun to have some. We will have hot chocolate and snacks available to help warm the belly.

The Recreation Committee would like to sponsor an afternoon snowshoe hike in February and then a full moon snowshoe hike in early March. Dates are to be determined.

We would like to thank Susan Coan for graciously donating two pairs of snowshoes and a pair of poles to add to our collection.

Jazz Piano Concert in April

In collaboration with the Leyden Cultural Council, we are working on scheduling a Jazz Piano Concert with local pianist Stephen Page in early April. Date, time and location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted by:

Steve Richter

Reccom@townofleyden.com

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance Program

With Certified TJQMBB instructor Penelope Corcoran

Monday & Thursday 10 to 11am

Leyden Municipal Office Building

“Program Objective: To improve strength, balance, and mobility, and prevent falls in older adults and individuals with balance disorders.”

This evidence-based program is designed to enhance postural stability, spatial awareness and mindful control of body positioning in space. Participants will learn and practice eight modified tai ji quan forms, plus therapeutic movements to improve balance. Each class builds upon itself. A chair can be used for assistance.

Beginners are welcome. Please drop in and learn about our class.

A donation of \$10 per class is appreciated to support our teacher.

Sponsored by the Leyden Council on Aging

Walk-In Wellness Clinic

Wednesday, January 14th

at 10:30am-12:30pm

in the Town Hall.

Everyone is welcome.

No appointment needed.

Services are free and confidential.

For more information or to discuss

health concern call Lisa White

at 413-774-3167 X156.

The clinic is held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month.

Council on Aging



Community Luncheon

Wednesday, January 14th at noon in the Town Hall
Menu: Shepherd's pie with salad, garlic knots and cookies.

Reservations are appreciated. Call [Linda Allis at \(413\) 834-4417](tel:4138344417). Leave your name and the number of guests. If you want a to-go lunch, please call Linda, leave your name and how many meals you will be picking up so we can have them ready. If you are unable to pick up the lunch(es) because of health problems, let us know and we can arrange delivery.

Not just for seniors - all ages welcome.



If the lunch must be cancelled due to inclement weather, we will follow the PVRSD weather cancellation policy. Cancellation notices will be posted on the PVRSD website: <https://pvr.pvrsk12.org/home>. You may also go to [WWLP for the latest cancellations and delays.](#)

Foot Clinic for Seniors: Monday, February 2nd at the Town Offices

Please call **Linda Allis** with questions or if you would like to reserve a spot. **(413) 834-4417**. There is a \$25 copay at the time of your appointment.

The Monday afternoon knitting and craft get-together is taking a pause.

For updates, contact Peggy Brown at 413-522-9276.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors. We have community support services in Leyden for people who need support and help for any reason. If you need help with transportation, picking up food or medicine, household help, medical appointments, or a friendly call, you can **contact Amy at 774-6907** or amy.woodsprite@gmail.com. To volunteer to help, contact Amy.

The next COA meeting is on Tuesday, January 20 at 2pm at the Town Offices.

We are looking for a new COA member! If you are interested in joining contact **Annie Garvey** at agarv3112@gmail.com or 413-775-1390. ***You do not have to be a senior to join the COA - just have an interest in the lives of elders.***

The COA is looking for volunteers to help with our monthly luncheon.

Can you help with set-up, serving, and clean-up on the day of the lunch, the 2nd Wednesday of each month. We can also use help with putting up and taking down signs announcing the lunch that are placed in three different sites in Leyden.

We have been providing food from Fosters Supermarket for our lunches. In the near future, we will be doing more on-site cooking at the Town Hall. At that time, we will welcome assistance with food preparation. You would not need to volunteer every month.

Let us know if you want to help. Contact **Annie Garvey** at agarv3112@gmail.com or 413-775-3910.

Leyden residents are welcome to attend events and classes at the Bernardston Senior Center.

Activities include meals, art classes, music, games, book groups, and fitness classes for seniors at all levels of physical abilities.

Call (413) 648-5413. Sign up for their E-newsletter at coa@townofbernardston.org.



413-773-5555

<https://lifepathma.org/>

Services include

- Healthy Living program
- Behavioral Health Services
- Benefits Counseling
- Nutrition education and consultations
- Caregiver Grants (caring for older adults or grandchildren)
- And more

Leyden Cupboard Opens at Town Hall!

If you find that your food budget just doesn't fill your basket the way it used to, you are not alone. In the spirit of community care, Neighbors Helping Neighbors has filled the kitchen cupboards at the Town Hall so that our neighbors who need a sharing hand can help themselves to items they would like.

The Cupboard is chock-full of non-perishable staples for you to refill your pantry. The cupboard has everything from soup to nuts, so come nourish yourself. There are no eligibility requirements and **everyone is welcome**.

Leyden Cupboard had a soft opening on December 10th immediately following the Community Meal. Many volunteers were on hand to welcome several shoppers and to stock the shelves with recent donations.

Leyden Cupboard will be open on Monday, January 5th from 5-7 pm and on Thursday, January 28th from 1-2 pm and immediately following (1pm) the Community Meal on Wednesday, January 14th. If these hours don't fit with your schedule you can reach out to our Librarian, Karin Parks (413.773.9334) who can open the Cupboard for you during Library hours (Mondays and Wednesdays from 1 -6 pm and Saturdays from 10am -12pm).

If you would prefer to have the privacy of shopping alone, or have a bag delivered, you can contact one of our Coordinators Jenny Campbell at 774.271.4195 or Karen O'Neil at 413.834.8009 and they can make special arrangements for you.

Additionally, thanks to an outpouring of generosity from our community, Neighbors Helping Neighbors has more grocery gift cards for distribution. If you, or a family member, friend or neighbor needs food assistance, please call Pam Brown at 413.775.3470. Your privacy will always be respected.



LifePath is seeking proposals for projects that support our region's Age & Dementia Friendly communities—where older adults and residents of all ages can enjoy greater well-being, connectivity, and belonging.

With generous support from Point32 Health Foundation, the second annual Age & Dementia Community Grant program seeks your leadership to make your Franklin County and North Quabbin community a place where everyone can age well.

These grants are designed to help local communities improve their buildings, public spaces, policies, programs, and more, making them welcoming and equitable for everyone, no matter their age or ability.

The Age & Dementia Friendly framework defines 8 key domains: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Health Services and Community Supports. Successful proposals will demonstrate a positive impact on at least one, and applicants are encouraged to consider projects that advance the Action Steps associated with each, detailed in the Age & Dementia Friendly Action Plan.

Franklin County and North Quabbin-based towns, libraries, Councils on Aging, Senior Centers, Village model organizations, businesses, and other for-profit and non-profit organizations are encouraged to apply, including past applicants. **Proposals are due February 1, 2026.**

Grant Guidelines:

- Grants are available in amounts up to \$3,000 to be spent in a 12-month period from approximately March 2026 - March 2027 barring any unforeseen delays. Proposals with budgets higher than this amount will not be considered.
- Organizations may submit no more than two applications in total, either as an independent entity or a partnership. For proposals structured as partnerships, please submit a one application, including a cohesive description clearly denoting the scope of work for each partner and a single budget including a separate line item and brief description for any funds to be transferred to a partner organization.
- Applicants must be located in and/or primarily serve individuals residing in Franklin County and the North Quabbin.
- Applications must be submitted by or on behalf of organizations, funds cannot be awarded to individuals.
- [Please review additional guidance provided on the LifePath website.](#)

Technical assistance in developing proposals is available; please email jmolony@lifepathma.org for this or any other questions.

Leyden Origins

In the 1600's the land of the Connecticut River Valley was inhabited by indigenous tribes. Conflict began with settlers moving in from the east and south. Indians raided settlements at Northampton, Deerfield, Hatfield, and Northfield that were taking over their ancestral homes. In 1676 Captain William Turner led a group of volunteers against a tribal farming and fishing village near what is now Turners Falls. They took the lives of the villagers, mostly unarmed women, children, and elders, thereby securing the land for those who had commissioned them.

In 1734 Survivors and descendants of Turner's men petitioned the Massachusetts General Court for a land reward. The Falls Fight Grant gave them the land of Falls Fight Town (Fall Town), what is now Bernardston, and the east half of Leyden.

The land was divided into proprietors' lots, and lots were drawn giving each settler tillable meadow land. All had access to woodland for timber and firewood. Lots were set aside along streams for mills and on the highest points for meeting house/churches and schools.

This piece is submitted by Nan Rolstad, Chair of the Leyden Historical Commission. Nan will contribute articles of general historical interest to Leyden Life from time to time.

**The Leyden Historical Display
is open by appointment.**

Email nannetterolstad@gmail.com

***The Sunday Coffee Hour
will return in April.***



Miss Maisie Raffensperger and Miss Cassie Koppenheffer have a November frolic on a Leyden hilltop.

For Leyden Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club, 1969

By Edith Snow

There's a strange new creature emerging on earth
I'll describe him to you for whatever it's worth.
He comes out of hiding in winter, I'm told,
And rejoices in weather that's terribly cold.
He finds joy in a snowstorm as no human can.
What is this creature, this new kind of man?
He leaves the warm fire, his wife and his kids
And climbs on a motor, a belt and two skids.
He's gassed his machine and is ready to go,
But, yet, poor fool, there is no sign of snow.
For the last 18 days he's been wearing a suit
That's covered in zippers from parker to boot.
A helmet and goggles he has on his head,
Good God says his wife, "Must you wear that to bed?"
The first snow has come, and the ground has turned white
He's on his machine and roars out of sight
Screaming into a blizzard of onrushing snow
He doesn't even know that it's 40 below
Over hill, over dale as onward he flies
Is it monster or man all you can see are his eyes
On the flat he'll crouch down, on the corner he leans
They tell me his blood is now pure gasoline.
But where is he found when the snow is not there,
Is he out on the porch in his old rocking chair?
No, he's there in the house for the whole world to see
Sitting on his snowmobile and watching TV!

Submitted by Nan Rolstad; Edith was Nan's mother



CLMATE CORNER: We're All in This Together

Joyce Vance, University of Alabama Law Professor has often used the phrase above. It is a grounding phrase, a reminder that the world we see on a daily basis is not the entire story. So, as one year closes and the new one begins, it may be time to review the bad, good, and the ugly in climate news and actions.

BAD: according to forbes.com, the **five largest** climate disasters in 2025 are:

1. Extreme Heat Waves due to their growing durations and greatest geographical reach.
2. Catastrophic Flooding with Mass Displacement are responsible for 35-40% of all weather-related events according to the U.N.
3. Melissa in the Caribbean morphed from a 70 mph storm into a hurricane with sustained winds of 140 mph in less than 18 hours. Top wind speeds over Jamaica were recorded at 180 mph.
4. Tropical Cyclones have become more intense and less predictable due to a combination of higher air and water temperatures.
5. Prolonged Droughts have caused global food disruptions, not a temporary situation according to the U.S. Drought Mitigation Disaster Center. They have called this a "slow moving disaster" as drought areas expand.

Within our country, the L.A. fires of last January were the costliest climate related disaster of the year, causing an estimated \$100 billion in direct economic damage. But we were also shocked by flash floods of the West and Midwest, carrying away campers in the night and ruining crops on a large scale. Just this December, atmospheric rivers, dumping sustained rainfall over a period of 10 days in western portions of Washington State, caused widespread damage.

GOOD:

- Renewable electricity sources are now surpassing coal as the least expensive source of power
- Globally, 80% of countries are increasing their **rate** of movement towards renewable power generation.
- Deforestation in the Amazon has slowed, but is not completely eliminated.
- Countries may now sue each other over climate change in a ruling by the International Court of Justice.(ICF)
- As of October the electric % of the new car auto market in Norway is 95.8 % compared with 13.6 % 10 years ago.

UGLY: The U.S. is likely to be moving away from the good. Here are some strong signs:

- ✓ Supporting the reopening of closed coal fired power plants while halting off shore wind projects in progress
- ✓ Ignoring ICF rulings because we are not members and do not recognize their rulings
- ✓ Removing increased fuel efficiency standards to favor gasoline auto production over electric vehicles
- ✓ An outright banning last year of all textbooks in Florida that mention climate change
- ✓ Halting the collection and sharing of yearly data on billion dollar weather and climate disasters on the National Centers for Environmental Information website, citing *evolving priorities...statutory mandates & staffing changes*
- ✓ Dismantling the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, announced December 17, 2025, and accused of "being one of the largest sources of climate alarmism in the country"

In her book Giving Up is Unforgivable, Joyce Vance exhorts Americans to **not** give up on our institutions, because we need them. She states, "...we are constantly learning more, developing our skills and getting better at it. We learn from our mistakes. We work harder. We get it right. We continue to practice...when we make mistakes, even big ones, we can learn from them. We dig deeper so we can fix them. We get back to work." Good advice for 2026.

Thank you, Karen O'Neil oneilk160r@gmail.com

Sources: forbes.com, ncei.noaa.gov, theguardian.com, bbc.com/future/article/20250721, Population Connection, December 2025 issue

Need Help Paying Your Heating Bill?

The Massachusetts Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), helps eligible renters and homeowners pay a portion of their winter heating bills. HEAP supports households across Massachusetts, regardless of the type of heating source or whether heating costs are included in rent. This is a grant and does not have to be repaid.



Eligibility Criteria

- Eligibility depends on income, household size, place of residence, and other factors.
- Household income must be below 60% of state median income. (See table below.)
- You don't have to be on public assistance nor do you need to have unpaid heating bills.

Household Size	Maximum Income Level
1	\$51,777
2	\$67,709
3	\$83,641
4	\$99,573
5	\$115,504
6	\$131,436
7	\$127,720
8	\$134,423
9	\$137,410
10	\$140,397

Not all income counts toward eligibility. Please confirm your actual eligibility.

The **HEAP (Fuel Assistance)** application process is streamlined to include multiple programs with one application, including:

- **Heating System Repair and Replacement Program (HEARTWAP)**
- **Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)**

For more information and to apply online go to the Client Portal: <https://toapply.org/MassHEAP>



To apply in person, contact

Fuel Assistance / HEAP
 Community Action Pioneer Valley (Community Action!)
 377 Main Street, Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-2310

With HEAP eligibility, discounts are automatically given on:

- Electric bills for investor-owned electric utilities
- Gas bills for investor-owned gas utilities
- Telephone bills

Program Benefits

- Flexible you own or rent your home, HEAP can help with your heating costs—even if those costs are included in your rent.
- Covers Various Heating Sources: The program supports a wide range of heating types, including: oil, electricity, natural gas, propane, kerosene, wood or coal. Heat also may be included in your rent.
- Direct Payments: Payments are made directly to the heating company, simplifying the process for you. No need to handle bills or complex paperwork.
- Fixed Amount Assistance: The program provides a predetermined benefit, ensuring that you know exactly what support you can expect.
- Simple Application Process: Applying for HEAP is straightforward. You can apply online, by mail, or in person at a local agency.

For limited income households who are not eligible for fuel assistance, please contact [The Good Neighbor Energy Fund](#) operated by your local Salvation Army. In area code 413: 1-800-262-1320.



Step into the New Year with a First Day Hike!

All 50 states offer First Day Hikes on January 1st.

For locations in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dcr-first-day-hikes>

Other DCR activities available across the state. (Locations are listed by region.)

Hiking trails <https://www.mass.gov/hiking-in-massachusetts-state-parks>

Cross-Country Skiing <https://www.mass.gov/cross-country-skiing-in-massachusetts>

Snowmobile trails <https://www.mass.gov/snowmobile-trails-in-state-parks/locations>

MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

Unclassified Ads

Unclassified Ads Policy Statement

We welcome unclassified ads from Town residents, and will run them free of charge (though a small donation would be most welcome.) We will run an ad for one issue unless requested to extend it.

CJ DESIGN, a small jewelry business. Are you looking for a one of a kind gift for that special someone? Holidays, birthdays, anniversaries or just because! I sell online at Poshmark.com my account is @cj_design. If you are a first timebuyer on Poshmark you can receive \$10 off your first purchase by using my code: cj_design. Make a bundle with your purchase and I will send you an offer. You can message me from your bundle or contact me, Carol Kuzdeba, 413-539-4684.

For Sale: Ariens 1332 Pro Snowblower. Very good condition. Asking \$450. Susan Coan 413 624-3906 Doylegf@verizon.net

Erik's Handyman Service: Let me help you with your "to do" list. Property maintenance, brush control, lawn mowing, roto-tilling, odd jobs, and miscellaneous projects. If you could use some help, give me a call at 413-774-9948 and ask for Erik, or e-mail erikshandy1@yahoo.com. Reasonable rates. Insured.

Vintage, Ethnic, & Just Plain Good-Looking Fabrics:

Baby quilts, aprons, placemats and runners. All the fabric items you never knew you needed!

Sue Carlson (413-624 3695; susancarlson455@gmail.com)

Pottery Classes. Private and group lessons in hand building and wheel throwing are available at my studio in Leyden. \$45.00 per hour and a half class, or \$275 for six classes. The classes do not have to be consecutive. Materials included. Call or email Rhonda for more info: 413-624-5175 or 413-325-3629 or rhondawain@verizon.net

I play Irish music on a tenor banjo and am looking for someone to play with and to give me banjo lessons. Please contact David Pomerantz: davpome@gmail.com. Thanks.

Come join our coop! The principal goal of our coop is to support local organic produce and products by purchasing in bulk. We welcome all! Let me know if you are interested in joining us. You can reach me (Devorah) at 617.331.1598 or devorah.vester@gmail.com for more information.



Support Leyden Farmers

Boer Goat Meat is available at Frizzell Hill Farm. Goat is quite tasty, low in fat and cholesterol, and high in protein and iron. Give it a try! Visit frizzellhillfarm.com for information and a price list. Thanks for supporting local Leyden farms!

Ed's Sugar Shack has fresh local maple syrup for sale. Available in gallons, half gallons, quarts and pints. Call **773-7619**, Ed Johnson, 72 South County Road, Leyden. Member of Massachusetts Maple Producers Association

Orchard Valley Farm is now offering Wool blankets that contain our own wool. "Throw" size is 52x76". Plaid with natural color with a dark gray banding. \$150.00. Also scarves Natural or Dark Gray 9x60". Both were woven in 2024 through our Baaay State Blanket Program. We also have a few sheep skins that were tanned naturally at a Vermont tannery. Natural Lamb available as always. Most cuts. Call 413-624-5562 or email ovbecky324@gmail.com for more information.

Quality Soap and Salve at Ninny Nanny Farm!

All-natural, nourishing, locally sourced lard-based goat milk soap. Many lovely scents and styles. Beef tallow balm to soothe and soften your skin. Come see what's new at the Soap Stand at 868 Greenfield Road!"

Patti Lawall at (413)325-1511. ninnynannyfarm@gmail.com

For help with: Water Retention features.

Rain gardens. Rainwater Harvesting - barrels and in the soils. Biological Soil Testing. Edible landscaping. Garden sites - no till, in ground garden, garden boxes, etc. Food Forests. Wildflower Meadows. Composting- thermophilic, static, vermicompost. Biological soil drenches - compost teas and extracts Disease and pest management without chemicals - no herbicides, fungicides, or pesticides. Text or call Janell Howard at 385-685-0544 or email how2grolandscapes@gmail.com



We can give a fair quote on any job, no job too big or too small.
We have the experience to complete your tasks!

Contacting the Police

Emergency – Dial 911 **Non-Emergency** but would like a call from a duty officer: Call **(413) 648-9208** or **(413) 625-8200**.

(A dispatcher will answer these numbers.)

Non-Emergency and you want to request information or report something that doesn't need immediate attention, please email us at police@townofbernardston.org. (Note: emails are normally answered daily, but may take a few days with the Chief's days off.)