

VETERANS HONORED at Quabbin Park Cemetery

BY PAULA OUIMETTE
pouimette@turley.com

WARE – One week after the town held its first ever Wreaths Across America Day ceremony, honoring veterans in town-owned cemeteries, volunteers made their way to Quabbin Park Cemetery with more than 260 wreaths to honor those from the lost towns.

These wreaths were received as a last minute gift to the town, Ware's Wreaths Across America Coordinator Frank Bateman said, and they were placed on gravestones in both Quabbin Park Cemetery and Holy Cross Cemetery on Dec. 23.

Wreaths Across America became a nonprofit organization in 2007, continuing the wreath-laying tradition started by Morrill Worcester, owner of the Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine over 30 years ago.

It all began one year when Worcester's company had a sur-

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Nicky Dexter and M. Dexter of Belchertown placed wreaths on veterans gravestones at Quabbin Park Cemetery the Saturday before Christmas.

TURLEY PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE

Energy and Sustainability Committee talks goals

BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – The Energy and Sustainability Committee met to discuss new items and reports concerning the committee and its various plans and goals for the community.

The Dec. 21 meeting detailed goals and priorities when it comes to looking at 2024 and what they wish to accomplish. Chair Jacob Robinson was joined by Chris Bambascus (Clerk) Frank Byrne (Vice Chair), Joanne Collins, Patricia Krebs, Todd Perry, and John Piekara.

2024 goals and priorities

The committee reflected on when they began in January of 2021 and the topics of energy and sustainability. There are many projects that are planned, and many are ongoing.

"We have the short-term, and the objective right now is how we set ourselves up for success in order to help advance this town-wide plan, as a part of the master plan," Robinson said.

Bambascus brought up the idea of having a consistent growth plan for sustainability.

"The first step would be to go through the Climate Resilience Plan and then figure out what our next steps would be to work towards for next steps," he said.

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EDIC discusses development of Carriage Grove

BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN — The Economic Development and Industrial Corporation meeting discussed the development of 15 acres of land and abandoned buildings (including the closed Belchertown State School).

At the Dec. 20 meeting, the EDIC talked about plans

for the area, and how to share updates with the community. The EDIC is partnering with MassDevelopment to make these improvements.

Carriage Grove site

Plans with the land include putting in an apartment complex with single and two-bedrooms units as well as studios in order to create a place of affordable housing accessible to more people.

There are more plans to introduce new businesses and more.

According to MassDevelopment, the EDIC is under contract with Brista Ventures, LLC to develop 12 acres into approximately 100 units of mixed income housing and to repurpose the former Administration Building into a community center, museum, cultural space, and either restaurant,

brewery or distillery.

The project is currently in design.

The EDIC purchased the site from the state following the closure of the Belchertown State School in 1992. The main campus of the property contained almost 400,000 square feet of abandoned buildings and utility tunnels with significant environmental issues

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Jason Perkins alongside wife Kamah and son Oliver during his in person reading of "Rock Stars Don't Nap".

TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO

Rock Stars Don't Nap

Jason Perkins appeared at the Clapp Memorial Library in Belchertown to read his new book "Rock Stars Don't Nap".

Author reads new book at Clapp Memorial Library

BY RYAN DRAGO
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The Clapp Memorial Library featured an author's visit with a new kids book on the shelves.

Jason Perkins of Chicopee visited the library to read his new book "Rock Stars Don't Nap". This fun and hilarious bedtime story is about a boy named Jimmy who was born to rock.

The story was inspired by Perkins' son Oliver who didn't want to go down for a nap. Perkins decided to listen to music and chose a lot of classic rock songs.

One Metallica song came up and next thing you know, his son Oliver was fast asleep.

This true story helped Perkins craft this unique children's book with the element of rock'n'roll as the theme.

"Rock Stars Don't Nap" was also inspired by classic rock songs. Jimmy loves to rock, but

his mother insists that it's naptime, his rock star world begins spiraling out of control. Jimmy plans to give the rock performance of a lifetime.

During his reading at Clapp Memorial Library, Perkins witnessed children getting into the spirit of the story by laughing along during Jimmy's rock star adventures. At the conclusion of the reading, kids got to stick around the library to get an autographed signed copy of "Rock Stars Don't Nap".

In addition, the kids got to work on a craft on a rock star themed craft. The craft was a paper craft featuring a child with a guitar in

Please see **ROCK STARS**, page 4



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Jigsaw Puzzle Competition celebrates National Puzzle Day

BELCHERTOWN – Teams of two are invited to participate in the Clapp Memorial Library’s Jigsaw Puzzle Competition for National Puzzle Day.

The competition will be held on Monday, Jan. 29 from 2:30-5:30 p.m. at the Library, 19 South Main St. Please try to arrive early

in order to ensure that your team is able to begin on time - the clock will begin at exactly 2:30 p.m.

Latecomers are welcome but won’t receive additional time.

Registration is required by Jan. 15. Please sign up at <https://forms.gle/wMJ48Vew5wTDs-5fQ8> or by visiting the Library.

5fQ8 or by visiting the Library.

In case of inclement weather, the puzzle competition will be rescheduled to Monday, Feb. 5.

Competition details: teams are limited to two people; teams may sign up at the library or by using the online registration form on its website; the event is open to

all ages (per library policy, children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult), each team will tackle the same 500-piece puzzle; no one gets a sneak peek - the puzzle will be revealed when the competition begins; teams will work in the Community Room at the Clapp

Memorial Library; the challenge concludes at 5:30 p.m.; prizes will be awarded to the top three teams; in case of unfinished puzzles, library staff will count the remaining pieces to determine the winners and the overall rankings.

All teams will get to take home their copy of the puzzle.

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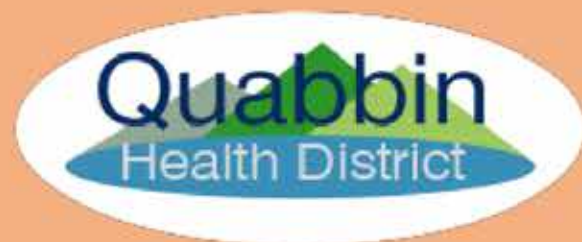
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TREE**



Library offers Winter Reading Program for adults

BELCHERTOWN – Time to curl up with a good book, as the Clapp Memorial Library kicks off its Winter Reading Program.

From now until March 30, adults ages 18 and up can sign up and take part through Beanstack (clapplibrary.beanstack.com) or through the Beanstack app. If you cannot take

part online, you can take part at the library.

If you have used Beanstack in the past, you already have a Beanstack account. Choose the “sign in” option, and then select whatever programs you’d like to register for.

As you enjoy reading over the winter months you can enter to win one of

the library’s raffle prizes. Read a book of your choosing, log the completed book in Beanstack, and receive a raffle ticket.

There is a maximum of 10 tickets per person.

Prizes include a \$50 Stop & Shop gift card, a \$50 Atkins gift card, and a “cozy” gift basket.

EDIC from page 1

that required abatement and demolition.

In 2012, MassDevelopment partnered with town and EDIC to help create a development vision and pre-permitted master plan for the site.

The project has received several grants, and as of 2020 approximately 325,000 square feet of vacant buildings have been abated and demolished.

In 2018 and 2020, respectively, Christopher Heights of Belchertown (an 83-unit, mixed income assisted living facility) and the Belchertown Day School were opened.

One member of the community expressed concern about the affordability of these new housing arrangements, and the EDIC members replied that they wanted to see the people of Belchertown be able to grow and expand, and they hope that these new living arrangements can provide that for the community.

Carol Lambert, a member of the community, asked about what affordable housing actually means.

“My first thought about the residential piece, is what proportion has to be, and what proportion is going to be affordable housing, and what actually defines affordable housing, and what the requirements are,” she said.

Jenkins responded to her question by explaining, “Low to moderate income families help determine housing to become affordable.”

He explained that housing and its pricing is dependent on the income of the families looking to live in these homes. He has proposed several steps to bring in housing for all that will create an easy, and affordable way for people of all incomes to find housing in the future.

“The world will change again, and again, and again, and we the Belchertown people will deal with the changes together,” EDIC member Bill Terry said.

ROCK STAR from page 1

hand and the children can put their names on the guitar indicating they are rockstars like Jimmy in “Rock Stars Don’t Nap”.

This picture book was Perkins’ first published book, and he has future plans instore for new stories for kids to enjoy. Perkins is currently working on two sequels to “Rock Stars Don’t Nap”.

This reading at Clapp Memorial Library was Perkins’ fifth reading for his new book. He began at a launch event for his book at the Barnes & Noble in Holyoke.

Other venues that were a part of the “Rock Stars Don’t Nap” world tour include The Eric Carle Museum in Amherst, Bank Square Books in Mystic, Connecticut and Comics N’ More in Easthampton. The reading at Clapp Memorial Library was Perkins’ final tour stop in the year 2023.

Perkins is based out of Chicopee



TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO
Jason Perkins is shown in the middle of reading his new book that many children enjoyed.

and is a special education teacher in Springfield; teaching for over 20 years.

He is a proud father of two children, his daughter Tallulah and son Oliver.

One of his biggest supporters in attendance was his wife, Kamah Perkins. With a cool surprise for dad, Kamah and Oliver were wearing “Rock Stars Don’t Nap” t-shirts featuring the front cover of the book.

“We’re very proud of him,” said Kamah.

“Rock Stars Don’t Nap” is filled with rock’n’roll puns, hidden easter eggs, and a discography of classic hit songs going back to the 1980s. The illustrations of the book were done by Cale Atkinson.

To learn more about Perkins and “Rock Stars Don’t Nap”, visit his website at jasonperkinsbooks.com. He is available for signings, readings and publishing talks.

“Rock Stars Don’t Nap” is a fun story for anyone who likes to “move like Jagger”.



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Please direct any questions to Arianna Palano at apalano@townofware.com, 413-478-2526.



Development status

An update from Robert Jenkins, the MassDevelopment lead talked about the state of several homes and buildings on Carriage Grove.

“We are advocating to the state to have these buildings come down. It’s all about right now, moving forward with the housing part of the development of Carriage Grove,” Jenkins said.

Jenkins is hoping to be able to get through the long process of gaining funds and materials for the project quickly so it can be worked on efficiently for the community.

The members of the EDIC want to make sure that the buildings on Carriage Grove are taken care of and the Grove and road can be made into a place for the community to enjoy and live in.

Communication concerns

Members of the community want to be involved in the process of the housing and development of infrastructure on Carriage Grove. EDIC member Bob Rivard holds a strong commitment towards the community and wants to welcome community support.

The people who attended the meeting expressed a need for more information from the EDIC, and for more communication about the Carriage Grove and more.

“The communication flow is lacking,” said Ronald Aponte, vice-chair of the Select Board said. “We need to address these very legitimate concerns.”

One resident said that she wanted to hear more, especially from the committee board members, about the process, and to be involved with the process. Rivard answered he would do what he could in order to ensure that information gets out.

“I think more people can be informed through some of the things we have been discussing, and we are going to get more information out to people,” Rivard said.

COMMUNITY

Rabies and microchip clinic to be held Jan. 20

BELCHERTOWN – A rabies and microchip clinic, hosted by Belchertown Animal Control and Westbrook Veterinary Hospital, will be held on Saturday, Jan. 20 from 1-3 p.m. at the shelter, 165 George Hannum St.

No pre-registration is required. Dogs must be on leash and cats in carriers.

Rabies vaccines are \$15 and registered microchips are \$25. Please bring proof of prior years' rabies vaccine.



ENERGY from page 1

Byrne brought up the idea of having the need for alignment and accountability so that they can stay on track with their long-term goals.

"For me, it's the sustainability plan...for me, I want to see my time immersed in this plan and alongside this growth plan," he said.

The committee talked about other ways in order to get the community involved in energy sustainability, as well as what sorts of programs they want to encourage.

"People need to hear from us, and I think in this coming year we can focus on opting up into green energy," Byrne said.

"There are so many people already doing things, and we can connect the dots and help connect those doing the work and act as a central point," Bambascus pointed out. "Energy is the main focus of our charter- why we were created."

Committee members also stressed the importance of being present and available to residents.

"We should really make a push to be at community events," Krebs said.

Piekara agreed, adding that "going to these events and putting these things out there

makes people aware."

The committee will be moving forward between now and their next meeting coming up with more goals to reach out to and involve the community in building this committee, whether it be through composting, posters, or more, the committee is looking forward to 2024 and all that they can accomplish together.

FY25 budget draft review

Robinson brought to the committee the idea of addressing the budget draft "to the town by addressing it to the Town Administrator rather than the Select Board." The budget will be used to run programs for the town and to advance plans to benefit the town.

The discussed budget for the proposal is \$5,000 and the hope is that this amount is approved so that the committee can work for the community. The motion to send it to the Town Administrator was seconded by Perry and agreed upon by all present, including Joanne Collins who attended virtually.

Reports from subcommittees

Robinson hopes to in the coming future work "more closely and align with Climate Resilience and Sustainable Growth Plan." Budget discussions for the committee are

ongoing for the next fiscal year.

Krebs came to the board with an update about the organizations EBSC and EBIP. The EBSC has completed an energy consumption test, as well as a safety test, and they are working towards becoming energy star-listed by January or February.

Perry talked about the Department of Public Work's grant that will allow its director to work better in waste management, as well as how the committee can help.

There is summer programming coming up in collaboration with the library that the committee will have the opportunity to teach others about energy sustainability.

"In 2024, we are really going to need to launch a campaign to promote opting up...we know that good energy is going to be a good marketing point, but we need to have good outreach about this," Byrne said.

Piekara talked about the Department of Public Utilities and the commissioners that want to "get some activity" going.

"Good energy is working from the state angle, we would like it to work from the town angle. Better communication is needed about getting the word out," he said.

First 2024 baby born at Cooley Dickinson Hospital



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Happy New Year and Happy Birthday!

Elliot James Krason was the first baby born at Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton in the new year. Parents Sarah Jeanne Boyle and Christopher Michael Krason welcomed Elliot, who was born at 5:14 a.m. and weighed

6 pounds, 8.1 ounces and was 20 inches long. Elliot is the first grandchild on both sides of his family, and he shares his birthday with his father's twin sisters who were born on New Year's Day as well.

Jessa Troy named to the Dean's List at Lehigh University

BETHLEHEM, PA – Dean's List status, which is awarded to students who earned a scholastic average of 3.6 or better while carrying at least

12 hours of regularly graded courses, has been granted to Jessa Troy of Belchertown in the fall 2023 semester at Lehigh University.

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OPINION

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Native plants often need to be coaxed into germinating

Are you interested in starting your own perennials from seed this year?

This column, straight from the archives, will be of use to you! Sadly, not all seeds sprout as quickly and easily indoors as tomatoes do.

Some seeds can be a bit tricky to germinate, and we must go through extraordinary measures to get them to sprout. In the grand scheme of things, you will learn that this is actually a good thing.

Take the Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) for example, and imagine what would happen if this late bloomer dropped its seed on the ground in October and the seed came up immediately? Likely, the seedlings would be so small and tender that they would not survive the winter.

On the other hand, if germination occurred in early spring (and it does!), success could almost be guaranteed.

The Cardinal Flower, along with many other native plants, has a built-in dormancy that is broken only by a period of moist-cold. Until "winter" has passed – either for real or simulated by us, these plants will simply not sprout.

In addition to Cardinal Flower, Columbine, Delphinium, Gas Plant, Great Lobelia, Lupine, Iris, Monkshood, Border Phlox, Primrose, Purple Coneflower and probably more that I am unaware of, all benefit from what is called "stratification." The term, which admittedly sounds a bit intimidating, refers to the practice of "stratifying," or storing seeds in layers alternating with moisture-holding material and exposing them to cold temperatures.

This can be accomplished both indoors and out, and it will go through the pros and cons of each.

No doubt the easiest way to expose seeds to a period of moist-cold is to sow them outdoors in the fall in a nursery bed or cold frame. They will go through the winter and when conditions are right (cross your fingers!) germinate neatly in their rows.

But because you are outside, seeds can sometimes disappear thanks to ants, rodents and birds. Weeds can also pop up in the seed bed, making it hard to tell which plant is which!

The elements can likewise take their toll and unless the beds are protected, soil can either dry out or get completely waterlogged.

Another way to stratify seeds outdoors is by using the milk-jug method. Taking a gallon size clear milk container and starting just below the handle, cut it almost all the way across.

If you begin just after the handle on one side and end up just before the handle on the other, you will make a hinge. Punch a few drainage holes in the bottom and a couple more on the sides, up and down from the cut so that you can "twist-tie" the jug shut after you are done.

Fill the bottom half with well-moistened seed starting mix and plant the seeds according to the directions on the packet – if they are tiny don't cover; simply press them into the soil. Connect the two halves of the jug with twist ties (or just use duct tape) and label with pencil.

Keep the cap off to provide ventilation, then place in a spot protected from hard winds. As seedlings emerge in the spring you can flip back the top on nice days, but remember to replace each night and water as needed.

If you prefer to start your seedlings indoors you can mimic winter by placing your seeds in the refrigerator to "chill." Don't put them in there in their seed packets, though, since they must also be kept moist.

If you have enough room in the refrigerator, you can simply sow them in their flats, cover the flat with a loose plastic bag and place it inside for the recommended length of time, usually anywhere from one to three months. Afterwards, set them out to germinate as you normally would, with supplemental light and bottom heat (in other words, fake spring this time around!).

Most folks don't have a spare refrigerator to fill up with seedling flats. In this case put a small amount of moist seed-starting medium in a tiny plastic bag and sprinkle in the seeds.

Please see **GARDEN**, page 7



LETTER

State School project would create major change for town

Dear Editor,

At a recent meeting of the Board of Selectmen, a local resident voiced concern for the lack of transparency regarding the development of the State School site by a New York developer.

It seems that the permitting process is moving along without much oversight or information provided to the public. The taxpayers of Belchertown should not have to dig or attend meetings to be informed.

A project of this magnitude should have public oversight, yet I see nothing in the local paper regarding such. They have recipes from Aunt Tillie but no news of town affairs.

Make no mistake about it, this development will change the character of Belchertown from the rural community it is, to a city, with all the problems that are associated with cities today, such as increased crime and higher taxes caused by a demand for more services from the police, fire and schools. When reviewing this proposed development, will the tax dollars brought in by this development offset the major increases required by the demand in the services mentioned above?

If not, why bother developing this project? It is already a major concern for the Water District where it has been reported

that there is little or no capacity of water to accommodate the housing project.

There are major questions here. Without expansion, if the project is allowed to hook up, how will that affect current users.

If the water system is to be expanded for this project, who is going to pay for it? The current Water District, the taxpayers or the developer.

Where is the study or information on this? With 100 units of low-income housing being proposed, what will be the additional cost and burden on the schools?

As it is, the town is looking to replace Jabish Brook at a cost to the town of approximately 40 million dollars. What is the net gain on this project in the way of taxes for the town?

This project when completed will result in severe lifestyle changes for current residents, it is estimated that 1,200 cars per day will be added to our streets. Where is the traffic study?

Can our streets handle that? What will be the impact on traffic to the neighborhoods by those trying to avoid traffic jams by using neighborhood streets.

This project begs the question, is the juice worth the squeeze?

Richard G. Barry
Belchertown



If my wife claims now, will it hurt my Social Security Amount?

Dear Rusty

I am 69 years old, and my wife turned 70 early this year. I am still working full time. My wife is not working, but she got a letter from Social Security saying she should take her Social Security as soon as possible.

My question is: since my wife has reached her full retirement age, can she take her SS without it affecting mine when I claim? I plan to work at least another year, depending on how the economy goes I may have to work longer if it doesn't get better. I have IRAs and a 401k to pull from when I retire.

Signed Anxious Husband

Dear Anxious

The reason your wife received a letter from Social Security suggesting she claims now is because her benefit reached maximum some time ago at age 70. Thus, there

is no reason for her to wait beyond age 70 to claim. By delaying past age 70 your wife is losing money so she should apply as soon as possible.

I suggest your wife call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or your local office right away to request an appointment to apply for her benefits and she should be sure to request six months of retroactive payments. SS will pay up to six months retroactively.

If your wife has a "my Social Security" online account, she can also apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply, but she should be sure to request six months of retroactive benefits in the "Remarks" section of the online application. Because your wife is more than six months past age 70, getting six months retroactive benefits will not reduce her age 70 benefit amount. Nor will your wife claiming her benefits now negatively affect your Social Security when you later claim.

Even though you plan to continue working, likely beyond 70 years of age yourself, you should not wait beyond age 70 to claim for the same reason, your benefit will reach maximum when you are 70. You can apply for your benefits up to four months in advance and specify you want benefits to start in the month you turn 70.

If you haven't already done so, you may wish to create your own "my Social

Please see **SSI**, page 7

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Applications open for young women award

Applications for the 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Award are available from the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley.

Applications can be obtained from the high school guidance counselors in local towns and on its website: ZontaQV.org/scholarships/.

A local recipient will receive a \$1000 award, funded by the Zonta Club of the Quaboag Valley and will be entered for the District YWPA award. The District recipient will be eligible for a \$5,000 award from Zonta International.

According to Zonta Club President Dana Burton, the goal of the award is to encourage young women to participate in public and political life by recognizing a young woman's involvement in government, policymaking, and volunteerism.

"The YWPA program looks to the young women of today for leaders of tomorrow and advocates the Zonta International's mission of advancing the status of women worldwide," said Burton.

To be eligible for this award, applicants must be between the ages of 16 and 19, have an active commitment to volunteerism, leadership achievements, and experience in local or student government. Applicants must be pre-university or pre-college students.

Completed application and supporting documentation are due to the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley by March 8.

GARDEN from page 6

After "winter" has elapsed, sprinkle the contents on to the top of moistened soil in your container and firm down. Large seeds can be covered with an additional sprinkling of growing medium. Proceed as above to promote germination.

If you plan to order perennial seeds by mail, do so soon, so that you can stratify and have them sprout at the normal time. This may sound tricky, but it's really pretty simple, and the pay-off is lots of new plants for your perennial border!

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

SSI from page 6

Security" online account now at www.ssa.gov/myaccount, which will make it easier for you to apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply when the time comes next year. Applying online is, by far, the most efficient way, but you need to have your online account set up first to do so.

Just so you know, there is no need to worry that you won't get credit for work income earned after you have applied for your benefits. Even after you are collecting benefits, Social Security will automatically review your earnings each year when that information is received from the IRS, after you file your income tax return.

If your most recent earnings are higher than those in any of the 35 years of lifetime earnings used to calculate your benefit when you claim, Social Security will automatically increase your monthly payment amount. In other words, you shouldn't delay past age 70 to claim Social Security because you're working; you'll still get credit for those earnings, automatically.

So, I suggest that your wife take fast action to apply for her Social Security benefits to avoid losing any more money and that you plan to apply for your benefits to start when you turn 70. There is no financial advantage to waiting beyond age 70 to claim, even if you continue working.

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



Amherst man sentenced to state prison for distribution of child abuse images

NORTHAMPTON – A Hampshire Superior Court Judge earlier this month sentenced an Amherst man to a state prison term following a lengthy investigation sparked by cyber tips that the man had been receiving and disseminating images of sexual exploitation of children.

Judge James Manitsas sentenced Blake Lassiter, who formerly lived in an Amherst apartment complex, to 4 ½ to 5 years in state prison after he pleaded guilty to possession of child sexual abuse material; nine counts of dissemination of child sexual abuse material; and a single count of possession with intent to distribute child sexual abuse material.

Manitsas also sentenced Lassiter to serve five years of probation once he is released from state prison, with conditions that he have no unsupervised contact with minors, undergo sex offender treatment and allow the Probation Department to search

his electronic devices. That sentence was handed down Dec. 8, and will not take effect until after Lassiter completes a 24-month jail sentence in Oregon for similar charges.

For the Massachusetts crimes, Northwestern Assistant District Attorney Anne Yereniuk recommended a 10-12 year state prison sentence. Defense Attorney Joseph Simmons had recommended a state prison sentence concurrent with the Oregon sentence.

"Despite the best efforts of the Amherst Police Department and the National Child Victim Identification Program at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, we were unable to identify the child victims depicted in these images, but we know the impact of the defendant's behavior on those children is devastating," said Yereniuk in a press release.

"Thanks to the hard work of the

Amherst Police Department in cooperation with the Clatsop County Sheriff's office investigators, justice was finally served," said Yereniuk. "Without the dedication and efforts of diligent, collaborative investigators, this outcome would not have been possible."

The case involved the distribution of images of abuse to another party in the United Kingdom. Lead investigator Joshua Harris from the Amherst Police Department Detective Bureau applied for and obtained numerous search warrants, including for relevant social media accounts.

Lassiter, a former member of the U.S. Coast Guard, became the subject of a cyber tip investigation first in Oregon and then in Amherst, where he moved, based on images he uploaded to his Reddit social media account.

Zonta Club hosts foster care information meeting

LUDLOW – The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley will hold a panel discussion and dinner on Monday, Feb. 12 at the Ludlow Country Club for anyone interested in learning more about the realities and opportunities in the foster care system in western Massachusetts.

The program will be facilitated by Andrea Bordenca, founder of Lead Yourself Youth and will include representatives from Family Justice Advocates, Department of Children and Family Volunteer Case Review Program and Family Resources, Court Appointed Special Advocates and other organizations that provide services to foster children and families.

The meeting will begin with

socializing at 5:30 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner at 6 p.m., then the program. Dinner \$28 is payable by cash, check, or credit card the night of the event, but RSVP to info@zontaqv.org by 2/7 for the caterers.

Contact info@zontaqv.org for information on sliding scale fee.

While the experiences of foster children vary widely, some common themes emerge during this critical, formative stage of their lives: trauma, instability and uncertainty, emotional and psychological challenges, and educational disruptions.

Children who are removed from their birth family due to neglect or abuse can be in multiple foster situations for a long time before being reunited or adopted by another fam-

ily. Due to a severe shortage of foster homes and volunteer advocates, many of these youth are placed in any home with the space, whether or not it is the best match.

For more information, visit zontaqv.org/foster.

About Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley

The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley has members from the towns of Belchertown, Brimfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holland, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Palmer, Spencer, Wales, Ware, Warren, West Brookfield, Chicopee, Hampden, Ludlow, Westfield and Wilbraham.



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EDUCATION



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sustainability Club member and Amherst resident Moe Avila Langmore, Class of 2024 at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School, dropped off the donations to the Amherst Survival Center on Friday, Dec. 22, before heading off to enjoy Winter Break.

PVPA's Sustainability Club hosts food drive for Survival Center

SOUTH HADLEY – Pioneer Valley Performing Art's Sustainability Club recently held a Food Drive to benefit the Amherst Survival Center.

Donations were accepted throughout December, as well as at the Visual Arts Department's recent Winter Art Gallery on Dec. 21. In total two large boxes and several bags of groceries were donated to the Survival Center.

The Amherst Survival Center's Food Pantry provides assistance to residents of Amherst, Belchertown, Deerfield, Granby, Hadley, Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, South Deerfield, South Hadley, Sunderland, Ware and Whately, and to those who are experiencing homelessness. For information on accessing services from the Survival Center's Food Pantry, please email pantry@amherstsurvival.org or call 413-549-3968 extension 104.

PVPA's Sustainability Club is one of over 30 student-led clubs and affinity groups at the public charter school. The Club focuses their work on protecting

the environment through sustainability efforts.

Other recent projects have included a clothing donation drive that collected over 525 pounds of clothing.

The club then held a free thrift shop at PVPA's Unity Day celebration, where students were able to shop for free, taking home 340 pounds of "new to them" clothing. The remaining 185 pounds of clothing was donated to Margret's Pantry in Holyoke.

About PVPA

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School is a regional public charter school serving 400 students in grades seven-12, from 60 towns throughout western Massachusetts. PVPA's mission is to offer students an intensive exposure to the performing arts within the context of an excellent college preparatory curriculum.

For more information about PVPA, and to apply for the 2024/2025 school year visit www.pvpa.org/admissions.

State awards HCC \$1.46 million to build nursing workforce training program

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College and its partners have been awarded a state grant worth nearly \$1.46 million to create a certified nursing assistant to licensed practical nurse training program to help area hospitals meet their workforce needs.

Earlier this month, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced a total of \$3.9 million in Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success grants for six initiatives representing employers and collaborative organizations across the Commonwealth.

The lion's share of that money - \$1,457,143 - will go to an HCC-led training program to assist 86 unemployed or underemployed individuals transition from jobs as nursing aides to positions as licensed practical nurses.

The grants, funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and distributed by the Commonwealth Corporation, aim to increase sustainable wage career pathways for Massachusetts residents facing employment barriers and improve the competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses by enhancing worker skills and productivity.

HCC's partners in the grant include Baystate Medical Center, Baystate Wing Hospital, MassHire Hampden County, Springfield Works, and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

"We are delighted about the Commonwealth Corporation's award to HCC and our many partners in this unique and innovative career pathway in nursing," said HCC President George Timmons in a press release. "Healthcare is one of the largest industry sectors in our region, and it continues to grow. We hope that this pathway for licensed practical nurses will help create more family sustainable incomes for nursing assistants looking to advance in this exciting and rewarding career."

The multi-stage program will first train individuals as nursing aides, then help them obtain jobs at area hospitals while they continue their training in HCC's LPN program, all the while providing them with wrap-around support services. HCC already has an existing framework for CNA training through its Jump Start program, which is designed for individuals receiving public assistance.

"Every individual in Massachusetts should have access to quality job training, and our employers should have access to

the skilled talent they need to do business," said Governor Maura Healey. "Our workforce is our greatest competitive strength. The latest round of Workforce Success Grants is another example of our administration's commitment to expanding opportunities and expanding our lead."

The grants were announced Dec. 18 by Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Lauren Jones during a graduation event at the Boston-area African Bridge Network, which received \$498,655.

To help leverage the state grant for the HCC-led project, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions invested \$200,000 to incorporate the voices and lived experiences of participants in the design of the program to advance equitable employment outcomes.

"This is an amazing achievement," said Anne Kandilis, director of Springfield WORKS/Working Cities Challenge. "Sometimes we focus on the grant itself, but the 18 months of hard collaborative work that goes into proposing something this big is important to lift up too."

According to the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the grants are part of a strategic investment in the Massachusetts workforce to develop programs that support individuals facing barriers to employment, such as lack of formal schooling, language literacy, or past involvement with the criminal justice system.

"Investing in our workforce and our businesses is investing in the Massachusetts economy and puts the state in a position to succeed," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "These grants help organizations attract workers who may be unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing barriers to employment and provide the necessary skills they need to thrive. These grants will help us achieve our workforce development goals, expand our skilled talent pool, and strengthen our competitiveness."

The six grant-funded initiatives aim to train and hire 384 individuals over three years.

The Springfield-based Entrepreneurial & Business Collaborative also received a grant worth \$630,998 to prepare 90 individuals for jobs in the hospitality industry. The group is partnering with the Northampton Brewery, Granny's Baking Table, River Valley Market, Tandem Bagel Company, and Puerto Rico Bakery II.

Other grant recipients include the Training and Upgrading Fund in Quincy (\$717,220), Cambridge College, Inc., in Boston (\$436,062), and Cape Cod Regional Technical High School District in Harwich (\$225,425).

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Over 260 wreaths were gifted to the town of Ware after its inaugural Wreaths Across America Day ceremony.



Volunteers came from surrounding towns to lay wreaths at Quabbin Park Cemetery.

WREATHS from page 1

plus of wreaths and he decided (with the help of Maine Senator Olympia Snow) to place those wreaths in one of the older sections of Arlington National Cemetery, to pay tribute to those who gave their all for their country.

That section of the cemetery received fewer visitors each year that passed, and Worcester wanted to thank those veterans whose sacrifices gave him the freedom and opportunity to build his successful career.

Last year, more than 2.7 million wreaths were placed at 3,702 participating locations in every state of the U.S., Puerto Rico and in 24 overseas cemeteries.

Wreaths Across America requires that in order to place the wreaths, whoever owns the cemetery has to approve participation in the program.

In order to secure enough wreaths for the four cemeteries, Bateman has paired up with two sponsorship groups, the Ware Middle School PTO and Scouts BSA Troop 281. Sponsoring a wreath is \$17, of which \$5 goes to the sponsoring group.

Wreaths can be sponsored by visiting the link for either sponsoring group: Scouts BSA Troop 281, <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/pages/175907> and WMS PTO, <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/pages/176743>.

Now through Tuesday, Jan. 16, all wreaths sponsored through a registered Wreaths Across America Sponsorship Group will be matched by the organization for placement on next year's National Wreaths Across America Day to be held on Saturday, Dec. 14.

There is always an opportunity for other groups to become a sponsorship group. For more information, email Bateman at logman26meb@hotmail.com or call 413-949-6517.

"This a great start but we have work to do to make sure that every hero that rests here in town is honored with a wreath for next year," Bateman said.



Nicholas Bousquet of Ware placed a wreath at a gravestone, making sure the ribbon was in the 1200 position.



Ware's Wreaths Across America Coordinator Frank Bateman speaks to volunteers.



Cheri Chipman of Ware placed a wreath after reading the name of the veteran aloud.



Meghan Lagimoniere and Kathy Deschamps helped honor veterans with wreaths.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY PAULA QUIMETTE

Balsam wreaths were laid at veterans gravestones



Volunteers joined the Department of Conservation and Recreation staff at the Quabbin Park Cemetery to honor and remember veterans through the Wreaths Across America program.

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Belchertown Police Log

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of Dec. 20 through Dec. 26. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day. Of the 382 calls police responded to, there were 15 incidents, four accidents, seven arrests/summons and 56 citations.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS

Sunday, Dec. 24

7:16 p.m. – A Belchertown male was arrested on assault and battery on a household member.

11:17 p.m. – Andy Resto, 41, of 15013 Cedar Branch Way, Orlando, Florida, was arrested on charges of operating under the influence of alcohol, liquor. An officer was assisting with a clean-up and traffic during a two-vehicle crash, and two towing trucks were removing the damaged vehicles. There was no room to drive by and a marked cruiser was parked on scene. A pick up truck attempted to drive through the scene. A tow truck driver told the operator to stop. The operator drive through the scene. The officer walked up to the vehicle and spoke to the operator. When the operator lowered their windows, the officer could smell alcohol. The person was arrested and charged accordingly.

Tuesday, Dec. 26

1:57 p.m. – A 20-year-old Springfield man was issued a summons on charges of speeding and operating with a suspended license. An officer doing enforce-

ment on Boardman Road stopped a vehicle that was speeding 22 miles over the speed limit. The operator said they had a picture of their license but didn't have it on their person. The person was issued a criminal application because the license was expired.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Wednesday, Dec. 20

4:58 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person about a possible case of sexual harassment in the workplace.

6:55 p.m. – An officer received a call requesting a wellbeing check on a person's relative. The officer checked on the person. A copy of the report was forwarded to the behavioral health clinician.

9:35 p.m. – A 911 call received from a party in another town that their friend in Belchertown was having a mental health emergency on Route 9 by the Quabbin. Belchertown Police and Massachusetts State Police officers checked on the area. An emergency ping was put out on the person's phone and it showed the person was in Ludlow. Ludlow Police were forwarded the information and officers were able to locate the person who was transported to the hospital.

Thursday, Dec. 21

8:59 p.m. – An officer responded to a residence for a report of a juvenile having a mental health crisis. A report was filed with DCF and the SRO was notified.

10:26 p.m. – Officers responded to assist Belchertown Fire and paramedics.

Friday, Dec. 22

3:31 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person who received photographs in the mail along with a letter. The person didn't know any involved people and the matter was kept on file. They were advised if they received a letter or

any correspondence to call back and report it.

Saturday, Dec. 23

2:42 a.m. – A person called about a friend who texted they were lost in town and was looking for the Massachusetts Turnpike. The caller said the person wasn't acting normally and was emotional as they spoke to each other. They were able to provide information on the vehicle the person was driving. The person lived in the eastern part of the state. An administrator message was put out for a wellbeing check on the person. They were advised to call the person's local police department. A while later, an officer called back and spoke with the person and reported there was no police involvement needed.

1:55 p.m. – Belchertown Police and Belchertown Fire and paramedics responded to a medical call.

10:07 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Warren Wright Road. A vehicle on Warren Wright Road ran through a stop sign and entered traffic on Bay Road. The vehicle struck a second vehicle head on. Both vehicles were towed and there was heavy front end damage to both.

Sunday, Dec. 24

12:12 p.m. – An officer was patrolling the north end of town saw a fire hydrant that was struck on Federal Street. It was bent at a 45-degree angle with water pooling around it. There were two tire marks leading to the hydrant. The vehicle fled the scene and the officer found blue pieces of a vehicle nearby. Trash was also found with receipts from local stores and listed the person's name and phone number. Ludlow Police was asked to do a wellbeing check and contacted the person. The officers spoke with the person who said they

were involved, and the vehicle was a blue Honda Civic. There was heavy front-end damage to the vehicle. They admitted to being the driver and lost control of the vehicle and struck the fire hydrant. A Ludlow officer took photos of the vehicle.

10:17 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Oak Ridge Road. A vehicle traveling north on Summit Street was turning left onto Oak Ridge Road at a fast speed. The vehicle was struck by another vehicle on the passenger's side. The vehicle then struck an embankment. Belchertown Fire and paramedics transported a passenger from the second vehicle from the scene.

Monday, Dec. 25

8:25 a.m. – An officer going to a medical call saw the ambulance was pulled over and paramedics were looked around the ambulance. They said they heard a loud sound and observed a metal tool stuck in back side tire. The ambulance was driven to the fire station to be dealt with. Granby ambulance was contacted to respond to the call.

1:45 p.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire and paramedics.

Tuesday, Dec. 26

10:17 a.m. – Multiple 911 calls reported an accident with unknown injuries on Boardman Road. Belchertown Fire and paramedics dispatched to the scene as well as Belchertown police. A patient needed to be extricated from the vehicle. They were transported to the hospital. The accident is still under investigation.

4:24 p.m. – Officers responded to assist Belchertown Fire and paramedics for a person experiencing a mental health crisis.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 134 calls for the week of Dec. 15 through Dec. 21. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, Dec. 15

1:46 a.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle fail to stop for a red light. The vehicle was stopped, and the operator was issued a civil citation for failing to stop.

Saturday, Dec. 16

11:43 a.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

Sunday, Dec. 17

6:40 a.m. – A motorist reported a vehicle had gone off of the road and was its side. Granby Police and Fire responded. The operator was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Thursday, Dec. 21

9:25 p.m. – A motorist report observing a pick-up truck that was driving all over the road. The vehicle was located and stopped.

9:30 p.m. – An officer caught up to the vehicle that was reported as operating erratically and observed erratic operation. The vehicle was stopped and after an investigation, the operator was arrested.

9:47 p.m. – John Longley, 66, of Belchertown, was placed under arrest for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, 2nd offense and crossing marked lanes.



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Granby edges rival Orioles

GRANBY – In a very close matchup last Wednesday night, Granby defeated Belchertown boys basketball 74-70. The game was close throughout and there was a lot of fast-paced action, especially during the second half. Colin Murdock had a big game with 20 points for the Rams while Sawyer Clarke had 13 points. Cal Orzech had 13 points to lead Belchertown while Jackson Couchon had 12 points. Belchertown dropped to 2-4 while Granby is now a perfect 5-0 heading into 2024.



Sawyer Clarke lifts a long shot.



Colin Murdock is covered closely.



Cody White takes a shot near the free throw line.



Jacob Pacunas makes a strong pass up the court



Cal Orzech looks for a lane to drive to the hoop.



Gavier Fernandez looks to pass inside the paint.



Riley Goodhind eyes the opposition as he looks to drive the lane.

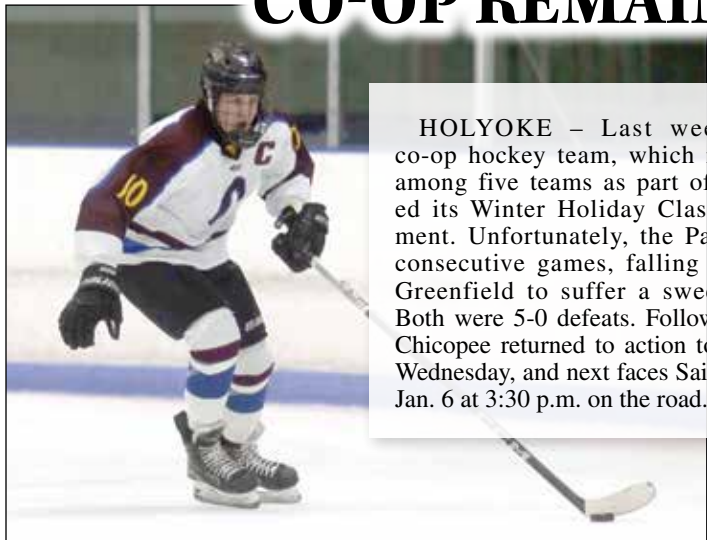


Jackson Couchon looks to make a pass inside.

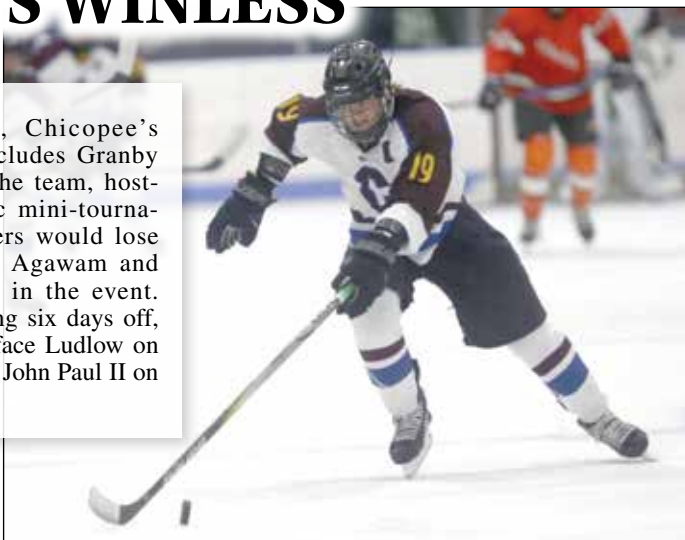
TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

CO-OP REMAINS WINLESS

HOLYOKE – Last week, Chicopee’s co-op hockey team, which includes Granby among five teams as part of the team, hosted its Winter Holiday Classic mini-tournament. Unfortunately, the Pacers would lose consecutive games, falling to Agawam and Greenfield to suffer a sweep in the event. Both were 5-0 defeats. Following six days off, Chicopee returned to action to face Ludlow on Wednesday, and next faces Saint John Paul II on Jan. 6 at 3:30 p.m. on the road.



Connor McDonnell catches up with the loose puck.



Stephen Samson heads up the ice.



Caleb Lundgren looks to flick the puck into the offensive zone.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Braydon LaDuke, of Granby, tries to get around an opponent.



Chris Walczak possesses the puck near the boards.



Nathan Robitaille heads up the side.

SPORTS

Pioneers fall after big comeback by Palmer

BY TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

PALMER— After falling behind early in the first quarter, the Palmer Panthers boys basketball team responded by scoring 14 unanswered points and they coasted to a 53-37 non-league victory over the Pioneers in front of a capacity crowd inside the Pathfinder Tech gymnasium.

"This is a really big win for us because a lot of the kids know each other," said Palmer first-year head coach Missy Rucker. "We also held them to less than 40 points, which is one of our team goals in every game. Whenever we're able to do that, there is a very good chance that we'll win the game."

The Panthers headed into the new year with a 4-1 overall record.

The Pioneers (3-1) suffered their first loss of the regular season.

"Obviously, this wasn't the result that we wanted, but I think we're heading in the right direction," said second-year Pathfinder head coach Zac Button. "You just have to give Palmer a lot of credit because they played an outstanding game against us tonight."

The last meeting on the hardwood between the two high schools, which are separated by less than a mile, took place at Palmer High on February 17, 2021. The Panthers won that con-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Seth Mitchell flies for a layup.

test by 28 points.

Both head coaches are hoping

that the series can continue during the next couple of years.



Hunter Griswold takes a free throw.

"It would be nice if we could continue playing Pathfinder in the

future and make it more of a rivalry game," Rucker said. "I think it's a very good thing for the community."

"This was a huge game for us," Button said. "I'm really hoping that Palmer and Pathfinder Tech can play each other every year. It was a great environment tonight."

A couple of the Panthers supporters who attended the road game were Palmer High School Principal Susan North and Athletic Director Matt Marciniac.

"The players have been working very hard at practice, so it was fantastic for them to have a lot of support at tonight's game," Rucker added. "I'm hoping that we can keep building our fan support throughout the course of the regular season. The players really deserve it."

Pathfinder Athletic Director Tyler Simons, along with several Palmer Police Officers, did an outstanding job of keep everything under control throughout the j.v. and varsity games.

It was a very memorable game for Palmer senior captains Andrew Menard and Shawn Troche.

"It was awesome getting an opportunity to play against Pathfinder for the first time," said Troche, who scored all seven of his points during the third quarter. "When I was in the eighth grade, a couple of the Pathfinder players

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 16

New modifieds event announced for February

AUBURNDALE – After discussion with race teams, competitors and fans, Showdown Series officials have decided to update the schedule for the upcoming events at Auburndale Speedway in February during Speedweeks. With the new adjustments, the 602 Modifieds and Tour-Type Modifieds will compete in racing action at Auburndale on Thursday, Feb. 8 and Friday, Feb. 9 only.

The Tour-Type Modifieds will run two feature races - one Thursday and one Friday. Tour Modified events pay \$2,000 to win, \$1,000 for second and \$750 for third. The 602 Modified division will pay \$500 for the winner of each race, \$350 for second and \$300 for third. The 602 division will run double-feature events on Thursday and one on Friday. The 602 Modified features will be 30 laps and the Tour-Type Modifieds 50 laps.

"We're getting more and more phone calls and momentum is building surrounding these Modified races and we wanted to do everything possible to avoid conflicts with the New Smyrna Speedway Modified events," Brad Hockaday, owner of Professional Motorsports Solutions, said. "Seeing Modifieds on Auburndale Speedway is going to be something special that fans and competitors are not going to want to miss. Extending Speedweeks a few days earlier is a great opportunity for everyone to enjoy some more time in the sunshine state."

For the 602 Modified division, unlike some other events, there is no age limit on the races. Teams are asked to be responsible with their drivers age and experience level to compete in this event. No NASCAR licenses are required for either division.

New Smyrna Speedway has

also adjusted the times for their parking times for Modified teams. No Modified teams (excluding the Whelen Modified Tour) will be able to park until early on Sunday morning. This means that teams can compete in the Auburndale Speedway events and have plenty of time to make it across the state, which is just over a two-hour ride. The Tour-Type Modifieds have been adjusted to go out early in the schedule for Friday and will be able to exit the track by approximately 9 p.m. The 602 Modifieds will race earlier in the night.

The tire rule for the event is posted online. The rule will be six race tires for the 602 Modifieds with the F45 by Hoosier, and eight race tires for the Tour-Type Modifieds running the M20 & M30. Practice tires allotment is unlimited for the event, but teams need to let the management know in order for Hoosier to have a proper amount on site for the event.

Race teams with questions about the event are encouraged to email wntshowdown@gmail.com. There are practice nights available on Tuesday and Wednesday. Each night has a session from 4-7 p.m. and another from 7-10 p.m. Each session is \$50 per car running.

Teams are also encouraged to register as soon as possible so the promoters can prepare for the race. For more information on the Showdown Series events at Auburndale Speedway, everyone is encouraged to visit <https://linktr.ee/seriesshowdown>. There, you can find the event tickets, registration forms, event schedule, event flyers, technical rules, general information and more. Auburndale Speedway will see the rumble and roar of Modifieds in February for the first time in the history of the Florida oval.

Railers edged in one-goal loss to Reading

READING, PA – The Worcester Railers HC (12-11-3-2, 29pts) lost in a close one against the Reading Royals (11-13-1-1, 23pts), on Saturday night, Dec. 30 by the final score of 4-3 in front of 3,233 fans at the Santander Arena.

The game started right where they left off last night: physical. The Royals would do most of the heavy lifting in this department as they committed their 8th and 9th penalty of the weekend with a tripping minor penalty by Royals Forward Kenny Johnson (0-0-0) and a bench minor by Forward Tag Bertuzzi (1-0-1) committed while he was on the bench. The Railers offense would make them pay on the Bertuzzi minor penalty. Joey Cipollone entered the offensive zone with the puck in the middle of the ice where he found Zach White open on the right wing of their offensive zone. White quickly sent a cross-ice pass to an open Daylan Kuefler on the left side dot and sniped it past Royals goaltender Parker Gahagen's blocker side. Bertuzzi came back the other way three minutes later for Reading and tied the game 1-1 going into the second period. The Railers led the period in shots on goal 13-11.

The Railers struggled to find many scoring chances in the second but relied on their defense

and goaltending to get them through the period and deny the Royals from scoring. The Railers were disciplined and managed spacing well throughout the period until they would get a power play opportunity late in the second period. Towards the end of the power play, Copeland drove the puck past Gahagen in net for the Royals to put Worcester back ahead, 2-1. The Royals answered back not much later with a power play goal by Forward Shane Sellar to beat Fulcher and tie it 2-2. The Royals led shots on goal in the period, 12-5.

Reading grabbed their first lead of the night when Matt Brown shot one blocker side to beat Fulcher and make it a 3-2 game. Late in the third, the Railers got another power play and did a great job keeping the puck in the zone and battling down low. Jenkins quickly fired the puck past Gahagen's low blocker side to tie the game up once again. Both sides would get chances on the net but nothing came out of it in the box score where this game would head into overtime. The Railers led the period in shots on goal, 14-13.

In overtime, the Royals worked their way down ice in a 2-on-1 3:18 into the frame with Brown and Bertuzzi to score and give the Royals the 4-3 win at home.

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and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

T-Birds fall hard against Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (16-10-3-1) had few answers for a confident opposing attack, falling 8-2 to the Providence Bruins (17-12-2-2) on Saturday night in front of a sold-out MassMutual Center crowd of 6,793.

The Bruins were opportunistic off a self-inflicted T-Birds mistake to jump to a 1-0 lead at 3:44 of the opening period. Will Bitten directed a pass back toward the Springfield bench, where a pair of defenders were in the process of a line change. Out of the confusion, Anthony Richard jumped on the loose puck and quickly snapped a wrist through Vadim Zherenko to give Providence the game's opening goal.

Rookie Bruins blueliner Ethan Ritchie would add his first career AHL goal just 60 seconds later, jumping up into a 3-on-2 rush and ripping a shot through Zherenko at 4:44 off a drop pass from Jesper Boqvist. Providence also made life difficult on the T-Birds' offense, as the Springfield attack mustered only five shots in the opening 20 minutes.

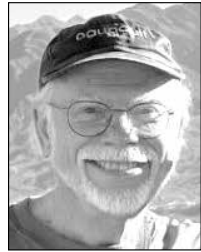
After going unsuccessful on a power play early in the second, the T-Birds saw a familiar bout of adversity when Justin Brazeau whipped a turnaround whizzer through Zherenko at 6:21 to make it 3-0 for Providence.

Please see **T-BIRDS**, page 16

OBITUARIES

John Hunting Belding Jr., 74

BELCHERTOWN – John Hunting Belding Jr. passed away Dec. 22, 2023, at the age of 74.



Born June 10, 1949, in Delhi, New York, John was the son of John H. and Eva R. (née Westerlund) Belding. John grew up in Hyde Park, New York and lived in Belchertown for the last nine years.

He lived in Grafton for over 30 years prior to that. John graduated from Stony Brook University and received his master's degree in Anthropology from UMass Amherst.

He was the Director of Planning at the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging and taught Anthropology and Sociology at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester. In recent years, he volunteered locally by leading a walking group at the Belchertown Senior Center and was active with the Belchertown Historical Commission and the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

John's love for travel brought him to Ireland, France, Germany, Portugal, Japan, Argentina, and Uruguay amongst many other destinations at home and abroad. Visiting family in England as well as having worked on an Archaeological Excavation in Aguntum, Austria and con-

ducted field work in Niger, West Africa brought enjoyment to John's life.

If he was not traveling the world, you could find him attending and photographing his grandchildren's sporting events. He loved photography, wine, fine dining, art, and music and was a massive fan of Arsenal FC and Taylor Guitars of which he owned several.

His rooted love for family was evident in everything that he did.

On Sept. 15, 2020, he was predeceased by his dear wife of 45 years, Meredith Anne Weiss.

John's love and memory will remain with his two children, Ethan Weiss Belding, and Sarah Abigail Wojnas and her husband Joseph, as well as three grandchildren: Lucas, Curtis, and Juliette Wojnas. John also leaves his siblings and their spouses, Wayne Belding and Miriam Sproul of Boulder, Colorado, Barbara and Carmine Rinaldi of New York, Janice and Bert Beatty of Las Vegas, Nevada, and Douglas and Deborah Belding of Hyde Park, New York.

A graveside service will be held privately. Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations in John's memory to the QCC Foundation, 670 West Boylston St., Worcester, MA 01606 or online at www.qcc.edu/giving and make the notation of Weiss-Belding Scholarship in Social Sciences.

Rene J. Bronner, 71

BELCHERTOWN – Rene J. Bronner passed away Dec. 27, 2023, at Mercy Medical Center, at the age of 71.

He was born on Feb. 14, 1952, in Holyoke to the late Rene A. and Alice (Berube) Bronner of Granby. Rene grew up in Granby and has lived in Belchertown for most of his life.



He worked at Major Wire Co. in Chicopee for 20 years and retired in 2016, as a truck driver for FedEx after working for over 10 years. Rene loved to golf and bowl and was an avid New England sports fan.

He adored his role of Pepere and cherished the time spent with his grandchild-

dren. Besides his mother, Alice, he is survived by his wife Pamela (Fernandes) Bronner, and their three children, Sara Grenier (Andrew), Josh Bronner (Ali) and Alyssa Williams (Leo). He is also survived by seven grandchildren, Owen, Elliot and Noah Grenier, Zoe Bronner, Janaya, Jehvon and Emmett Williams, two brothers, Alan and Lenny Bronner as well as many nieces and nephews.

Besides his father, he was preceded in death by a daughter, Jennifer Bronner.

Calling hours were held on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, at the Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home from 4-6 p.m. followed by a closing prayer service at 6 p.m. The burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to Mercy Medical Center ICU and/or Saint Mary's Medical Center NICU, West Palm Beach, Florida.

Christopher A. Euvrard, 54

BELCHERTOWN – Christopher A. Euvrard passed away Dec. 14, 2023, as a result of a serious car accident that took place on Dec. 1, at the age of 54.

Born October 12, 1969, in Athol, he is the son of Robert Sr and Marilyn (Cutting) Euvrard of Athol. Chris grew up in Athol and has lived in Belchertown since 2000.



In his youth, Chris was a wrestler and started the wrestling team in Athol. Chris was an avid sports fan. He loved to cheer on Boston teams.

Chris always looked forward to his Fantasy Football league and loved participating in March Madness.

For over 30 years, Chris worked in the Millimeter Wave Industry. He was co-founder of Precision Millimeter Wave Company.

His love for travel brought him to Maine, Portsmouth, New Hampshire and

Vermont. Chris and his fiancée, Tina, enjoyed the adventure of finding and trying new breweries throughout the northeast and attending live music events as well as Pat's games.

He enjoyed taking trips during the fall with his girls to Vermont.

Besides his parents, Chris's memory will forever remain with his fiancée, Tina Prefontaine along with his three children, Kyle, Allison and Haley Euvrard all of Belchertown. Chris also leaves Tina's sons, Alexander and Samuel Prefontaine as well as his four-legged friend and riding partner, Buddy. His five siblings, Deborah Teague, William Watson, Mary Thompson, Jonathan Watson and Robert Euvrard Jr. also survive him.

Visitation was Wednesday, Dec 27 from 4-6 p.m. at the Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home with a service and memories beginning at 6 p.m. A graveside service was held Thursday at 11 a.m. at South Cemetery in Belchertown.

For those wishing, donations may be made in his memory to Shiner's Hospital. Please visit www.beersandstory.com

Cynthia Ann Kane, 65

BELCHERTOWN – Cynthia Ann Kane of Belchertown died Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023, in Marlborough, at the age of 65



She was the daughter of George and Nancy (Brown) Borrell and the wife of Jeffrey J. Kane, to whom she was married for almost 43 years.

Besides her husband, Cynthia is survived by her daughter, Jessica Varney and her husband Richard of Marlborough, her son, Jason R. Kane of Belchertown, and her two grandchildren.

After graduating high school, she attended Stockton State University in New Jersey where she completed her bachelor's degree in environmental science with high honors. Cindy most recently was about to retire from her career as a Research Assistant at UMass Amherst.

Cindy met her husband, Jeffrey, while they were in high school. The pair had their first date Christmas Day 1975 to the movies and the rest was history. They were married on Jan. 9, 1982, and went on to start their family and raised their two children in Belchertown.

The only thing Cindy adored more than being a loving wife and mother was being a Nana to her grandchildren. She was a proud and beloved grandmother to both Frankie (4) and Jameson (6 weeks).

She will be deeply missed and forever in our hearts as the kindest, gentlest, and most selfless woman who loved her family and friends whole-heartedly. Memorial services will be held at a later date.

For Cynthia's complete obituary please visit www.slateryfuneralhome.com.

Lawrence J. Sweetman, 92

PALMER – Lawrence J. Sweetman passed away Dec. 23, 2023, at the age of 92.

Born in Worthington on Nov. 9, 1931, he was the son of Timothy Sr. and Bessie (Hersh) Sweetman.

Larry was a heavy equipment operator and mechanic for Goldstein & Gurwitz Construction for many years. During his time as a heavy equipment operator and mechanic and after his retirement, he also owned and operated Park Street Used Trucks.

Larry also enjoyed finding old tractors and restoring them.

For the past 22 years, Larry and his wife Sharon have lived in Belchertown.

He will be greatly missed by his wife of 49 years, Sharon A. (Kenyon) Sweetman along with his children, Sherri Coronado of Santa Rosa, California, Janet Sweetman of Denver, Colorado, Carol Sweetman of Las Vegas, Nevada, David Sweetman in Delaware and Laurie Guyette of Chicopee.

Sharon's children, Darlene Pacocha of West Springfield and Peggy Daley Demers of Fontana, California as well as seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren also survive him.

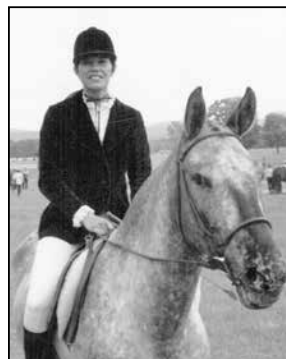
Larry was the last surviving of his siblings and is also predeceased by his parents.

Services have been omitted and Beers & Story Palmer Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations in his memory to either the American Cancer Society or American Heart Association.

Please visit www.beersandstory.com.

Cheryl D. (Provost) Szumski, 77

BELCHERTOWN – Cheryl Darling (Provost) Szumski, 77, was called home to be with the Lord on Dec. 20, 2023, at the age of 77.



She was born on Oct. 17, 1946, to Artrice (Messier) Provost and Charles Henry Provost.

Cheryl was a graduate of Granby High School, where she enjoyed gymnastics. She spent most of her life working in healthcare and caring for others, including her father, whom she took great care of for almost a decade until his passing.

Many of her years were spent working at the Holyoke Geriatric Authority and later at Meadowood Nursing Home of South Hadley. She took advanced studies in deaf culture at Holyoke Community College in order to support young women with hearing impairments through the Department of Developmental Services.

Wherever Cheryl worked, she brought joy to her patients, always going above and beyond to ensure she provided quality care and more than a few laughs. She loved to talk! And to say she was a people person would be an overwhelming understatement.

Cheryl loved horses and dogs and running a small farm in Belchertown for many years with her husband of 39 years, Mick

(Michael) Szumski, and reluctant children, Michael Greaney, (Chicopee) and Meredith Stanton (Holyoke). She spent many hours riding her beloved horse, Misty, in the woods, on trails in both Granby and Belchertown, with her longtime friend Connie (Jeffery) Quinlan.

She also leaves her big sister and best friend, Star Ouimet of Chicopee, behind. The two of them together raised a brood of children, pretty good ones too, setting them free into the world with big hearts and a sense of humor not unlike their own.

She and her sister talked every day for hours on end, and once Cheryl learned how to merge a call, you may have found yourself part of their conversation.

Cheryl also leaves behind her three stepchildren, Victoria Latham and her husband Michael of Colorado, Paul Szumski of Northampton, and Eve Cadigan of South Hadley.

Eve was a blessing to Cheryl. She was always willing to help her organize, bring food, do errands, and just provide patience and good company. Our family is so grateful to her.

Cheryl also leaves behind seven grandchildren, Jack, Charlie, Damian, Samuel, Jenifer, Alyssa and Kelsey; five great-grandchildren, and her fussy little dog, whom she adored. Cheryl loved us all unconditionally.

Services are private and at the discretion of the family. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Cheryl's name to the Belchertown Senior Center, where Cheryl loved to lunch with her friends.

Please visit www.beersandstory.com to extend online condolences.

DEATH NOTICES

Belding, John Hunting
Died Dec. 22, 2023

Bronner, Rene J.
Died Dec. 27, 2023
Services Jan. 3, 2024

Euvrard, Christopher A.
Died Dec. 14, 2023
Services Dec. 28, 2023

Kane, Cynthia Ann
Died Dec. 21, 2023

Sweetman, Lawrence J.
Died Dec. 23, 2023

Szumski, Cheryl D. (Provost)
Died Dec. 20, 2023

The Sentinel
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22	Base Price \$27.50	Base Price \$28.00	Base Price \$26.00
25	Base Price \$28.50	Base Price \$29.00	Base Price \$30.00
26	Base Price \$29.50	Base Price \$30.00	Base Price \$31.00
29	Base Price \$30.50	Base Price \$31.00	Base Price \$32.00
30	Base Price \$31.50	Base Price \$32.00	Base Price \$33.00
33	Base Price \$32.50	Base Price \$33.00	Base Price \$34.00
34	Base Price \$33.50	Base Price \$34.00	Base Price \$35.00
37	Base Price \$34.50	Base Price \$35.00	Base Price \$36.00
38	Base Price \$35.50	Base Price \$36.00	Base Price \$37.00
39	Base Price \$37.00	Base Price \$38.00	Base Price \$39.00
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To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the Town of Belchertown has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management, to determine the potential affect that its activity in the floodplain and wetland will have on the human environment for the Sports Haven Mobile Home Park Improvement Project (hereinafter, the "proposed activity"). There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information about wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk. Funding for the proposed activity will be provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Executive Office of Housing and Living Communities, Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant

Program.

The proposed activity is intended to provide the replacement of individual-unit septic systems with a park-wide septic system, as well as a new water conveyance system that will allow for successful delivery and removal of water from homes. The location of the proposed activities are surrounded by Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands and Freshwater Emergent Wetland. The use of new fully compliant water and septic systems will provide clean drinking water and wastewater removal services for the residents of the Sports Haven Mobile Home Park. The proposed project is located at 370 Mill Valley Road, in the Town of Belchertown, Hampshire County, Massachusetts.

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the proposed activity or request further information by contacting Steve Williams, Belchertown Environmental Certifying Officer, Town of Belchertown, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, PO Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007, during the hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Phone: 413-323-0403, Email: swilliams@belchertown.org. All comments received by **January 11, 2024** will be considered. 01/04/2024

Public Hearing Legal Notice Belchertown

Zoning Board of Appeals

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 11 the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday January 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM.**

This hearing will be held in the Select Board's meeting room of Lawrence Memorial Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA on the application from Dakota Richards seeking a special permit §145-69; to revert the building at 32 Park Street back to a four-unit apartment;

§145-17 C 2. Map 243 Parcel 65 Zoned B1A copy of the application may be inspected at the Town Clerk's office (Room 201) 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, Lawrence Memorial Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA. or at website https://www.belchertown.org/committees/zoning_board_of_appeals/index.php

Any Person interested and wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated.

Jennifer Sharrow, Chair Person,

Zoning Board of Appeals 12/28/2023, 01/04/2024

Public Hearing Special Permit Legal Notice Belchertown Planning Board

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Sections 9 and 11, and pursuant to the Town of Belchertown Chapter 145-29.2 and 145-69, the Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing to discuss a special permit proposed by Kalyx, LLC., One Monarch Place, Suite 730, Springfield, MA 01144 for a proposal to place a Non-medical Marijuana Establishment at 125 North Main Street, Belchertown, MA 01007, Map 238, Lot 183, owner: Colvest/Belchertown, LLC.

Place: Belchertown Town Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA

Date: January 23, 2024 Time: 7:00 pm

Remote access information:

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/173538941>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (408) 650-3123

Access Code: 173-538-941

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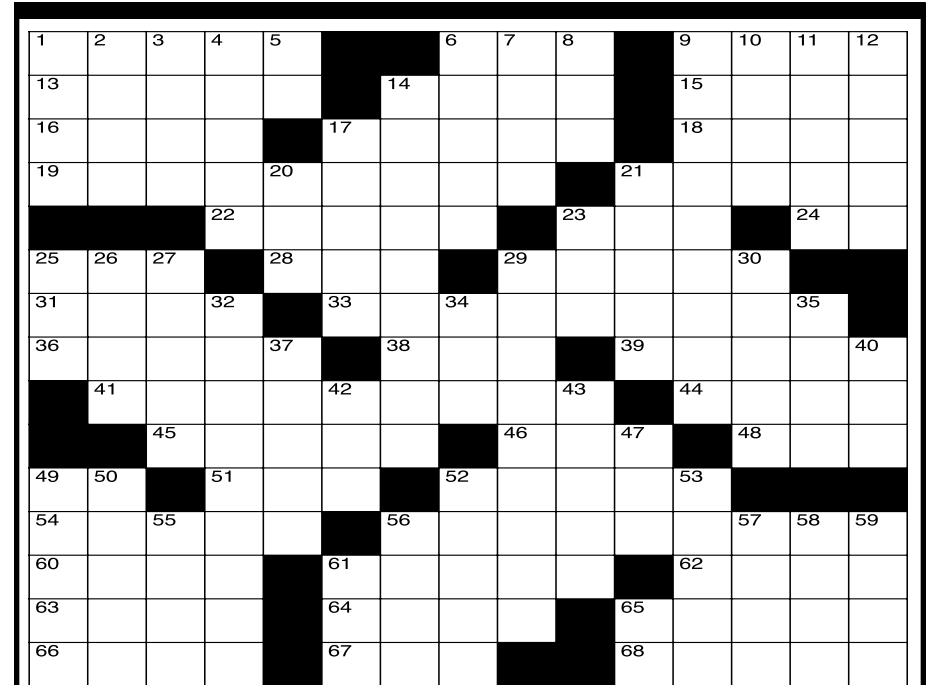
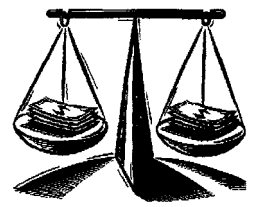
<https://global.gotomeet.com/install/173538941>

The application is available for inspection during

regular business hours at the Town Clerk and Planning Board office, 2 Jabish Street

Daniel Beaudette, Chair

Belchertown Planning Board 01/04, 01/11/2024



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bleated
- 6. Snakelike fish
- 9. Database management system
- 13. Russian-American violinist
- 14. Wendy's founder Thomas
- 15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 16. Negatives
- 17. Rescued
- 18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 19. Assigns tasks to
- 21. Island nation native
- 22. Trade
- 23. Detergent brand
- 24. Famed NY Giant
- 25. Before
- 28. Split pulses
- 29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 31. Body part
- 33. American state
- 36. David __, US playwright

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Curved segment
- 2. Wings
- 3. From pentane (Chemistry)
- 4. Gradually gets into
- 5. Commercial document (abbr.)
- 6. Overhang
- 7. Christmas and New Year's have them
- 8. Type of bulb
- 9. Lacking a plan
- 10. Tattle
- 11. Rockers like it "heavy"
- 12. One who's been canonized
- 14. Indicate time and place
- 17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
- 20. The voice of Olaf
- 21. Fragmented rock
- 23. They __
- 25. Master of Philosophy
- 26. Backside
- 27. Landmark house in L.A.
- 29. An act of undue intimacy
- 30. From which a later word is derived
- 32. Equal to 10 meters
- 34. Neither
- 35. Computer language
- 37. Sacred book of Judaism
- 40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 42. A way to dedicate
- 43. Challenges
- 47. British Air Aces
- 49. Large, influential bank
- 50. Portended
- 52. Cavalry-sword
- 53. Vaccine developer
- 55. Napoleonic Wars general
- 56. Italian Seaport
- 57. Hip joint
- 58. __ Clapton, musician
- 59. Insect repellent
- 61. Decorative scarf
- 65. Delaware

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PIONEERS from page 12

were my teammates on a Palmer Youth Basketball team. We won a championship title that season.”

Menard, who was a force at the defensive end, finished the contest with five points.

Palmer freshman Taydem Haley, who’s also a captain, led the way offensively in the road victory with a game-high 16 points, which was also his season-high. He has scored ten or more points in four of the first five games.

“Taydem has been a catalyst offensively for us so far this season,” Rucker said. “He has been consistently scoring in double digits. That’s what we’re expecting from him.”

The seven Pathfinder seniors, who were hoping to celebrate a victory against Palmer, are Trevor Allard, Hunter Griswold, Richie Gula, Branden Hnitecki, Luke Magnus, Adrien Moskovitz, and Adam Slonka.

The home team raced out to a 5-0 lead less than two minutes into the contest.

The Pioneers got on the scoreboard on the game’s first possession following a Slonka (10 points) old fashion three point play. Then following a steal by Gula, who led the home team with 12 points, Mitchell (3 points) hit a jumper in the lane.

A pair of inside hoops by Palmer sophomore Gavin Smola (8 points), which were sandwiched around a made free throw from sophomore Dylan Doherty (5 points) tied the score for the first and only time.

With 4:55 left in the opening quarter, a

Haley steal and lay-up gave the Panthers the lead and they never looked back after that.

Palmer entered the second stanza with a 14-5 lead following back-to-back lay-ups by sophomore Angel Torres (8 points) and a Haley coast-to-coast lay-up.

A little more than a minute into the second quarter, the Pioneers were only trailing by three points (14-11). Gula buried a 3-pointer from the left side and Moskovitz (5 points) was fouled while making a lay-up. He added the bonus free throw completing the old fashion three point play.

The Panthers closed out the first half with a 13-4 run and headed into the locker room holding a 27-15 lead.

A Troche 3-pointer from the left corner increased the Panthers lead to 31-17 three minutes into the third quarter.

“I didn’t score any points in the first half, so it felt very good after I made the 3-pointer in the third quarter,” said Troche, who joined the varsity basketball team as a sophomore. “I also scored a few more points, which helped us keep the momentum.”

A put-back hoop by Palmer sophomore Stephen Fredette capped off a 9-0 run and it pushed the Panthers lead to over twenty points (40-19) for the first time.

The Pioneers outscored the Panthers, 17-9 over the final eight minutes of the contest, but they couldn’t get any closer than 16 points.

The two boys’ basketball teams are scheduled to meet again down the street at Palmer High School during the 2024-25 regular season.



Richie Gula tries to sent a shot over the defense.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM Adrien Moskovitz takes a shot.

T-BIRDS from page 12

The T-Birds gave the sellout crowd a glimpse of another comeback bid when Jakub Vrana extended his point streak to four games with a beautiful wrist shot under the crossbar behind Brandon Bussi, cutting the lead to 3-1 just 18 seconds after the Brazeau goal.

The two-goal deficit proved only temporary, though, as Jesper Boqvist scored

on the front end of a four-minute power play, one of his three points on the night, at 8:40 to make it 4-1.

Zach Bolduc had the opportunity to give the T-Birds another jolt when he was awarded a penalty shot with Springfield down a man at the 10:46 mark. However, Bussi had the answer with the leg pad,



shutting the rookie’s bid down and keeping Providence ahead by three.

The Bruins rewarded their goalie in kind with back-to-back power-play goals from John Farinacci at 11:31 and Trevor Kuntar at 15:11, upping the margin to 6-1 before Bitten finally got Springfield on the board again with a pow-

er-play tip-in at 19:27 of period two.

Patrick Brown would add to the Providence lead with a rush up the left side at 7:17 of the third, and Jayson Megna capped off the scoring by netting the first shorthanded goal against Springfield all season at 18:00.

The T-Birds finish up the homestand as they begin a 3-in-3 weekend against the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins on Friday at 7:05 p.m. at the MassMutual Center.



This holiday season, protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID & the FLU!

Holiday gatherings are starting up, which means it’s time to prevent the spread of germs by getting vaccinated!

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