

Coordinator working to develop branding standards for town

BY MELINA BOURDEAU
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – Much like advertisements from the Super Bowl made an impression,

Belchertown's Creative Economy Coordinator seeks to brand the town's public facing materials.

The Select Board approved that E. Maude Haak-Frendscho, in conjunction with other com-

mittees, submit a release designer request for proposal for branding for the town.

This RFP would allow for the town to get a designer to be able to make a template for guides and

brochures for various uses for the town boards and committees.

In the meeting, Haak-Frendscho said there have recommendations to create consistent public-facing branding materials

for the town to be used for "small businesses, tourism, economic development goals and interested public information."

Please see **BRANDING**, page 5

Readers Theater takes the stage



TURLEY PHOTO BY NICK BOONSTRA

Four local elementary schoolers, Chloe, Ella, Hazel and Nicholas, put on two short plays during the Recreation Department's Readers Theater program, one of which they helped to write themselves alongside the program's director, Laura Bishop.

Youth participate in Rec. Department's theater program

BY NICK BOONSTRA
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The future of stagecraft was shown to be in

capable hands on Jan. 29, as the Recreation Department's Readers Theater program delivered an excellent performance at Town Hall.

Four local elementary schoolers, Chloe, Ella, Hazel and Nicholas, put on two short plays, one of which they helped to write themselves alongside the program's director, Laura Bishop. The young thespians brought a

buoyant energy to their performances as they acted out scripts that addressed friendship and conflict through magic and adventure.

Readers Theater is a program that "develops reading fluency, comprehension, writing skills, confidence in speaking, and excitement for reading," accord-

Please see **STAGE**, page 3

SB discusses budgets for next fiscal year

BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Staff Writer
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GRANBY – The Selectboard met to go over the fiscal year 2025 budgets for several departments throughout the town, and how to ensure all departments are accounted for responsibly.

The Feb. 8 meeting included Chair Glen N. Sexton, Clerk Crystal Dufresne, and Member Richard Beaulieu. They were joined by Police Chief Kevin O'Grady, Fire Chief Michael O'Neil, and Deputy Director of Operations Chris Faria.

Police Department budget

O'Grady came to the board with the rundown of items needing fixing or replacement, as well as discussing the wages for officers and pay increases.

Part-time wages increased 3% and overtime was discussed with a budget for that. O'Grady also provided an information technologies update and described the need for new computers and server.

"It will allow us to combat fallbacks," O'Grady said. He also discussed another factor that needed upgrading the department's weapons, which were old.

O'Grady discussed the need for accreditation and that the weapons were required to be owned by the town, which would repair and maintain them.

The department is currently in need of 20 firearms and

four additional rifles. He also brought up the replacement of a 2019 cruiser and a 2012 explorer, which have high mileage and are getting old.

Fire Department budget

O'Neil proposed his department's budget to cover firefighters, EMS and ambulance.

He brought up software maintenance line issues, where they had been "piggybacking off of police department." They want to have an IT company assess the software because it crashed, and some things became lost.

The cost of protective gear has risen to \$5,500, and it needs to be considered within the budget. O'Neil also brought up air packs and a plan to replace them every two years in order to prevent having to replace many all at once.

Salaries and wages are rising across the country, and contracts are being reviewed for new pay, which went up 5%. The Fire Department is also looking to hire a seventh full-time firefighter.

Ambulances are in need of a few touch-ups regarding technology, as well as discussing the new EMS salaries with the pay increase.

Maintenance

Faria was present to discuss budget matters for the maintenance department and the vari-

Please see **GRANBY**, page 5

From Doormats to Dynasty

Author provides presentation of the history of the New England Patriots

BY RYAN DRAGO
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The Clapp Memorial Library welcomed author and sportswriter Martin Gitlin to present a unique sports

history presentation titled, "From Doormats to Dynasty: History of the Perennial Powerhouse Patriots."

The team featured for Gitlin's presentation is a team unique to the region of New England, The Patriots.

Gitlin provided a series of stories, notes and clips featuring the history of New England's beloved professional football team. The history dates back to the 1960's during the days of the American Football League before their



TURLEY PHOTO BY RYAN DRAGO

The Clapp Memorial Library hosted author and sportswriter Martin Gitlin and his presentation of the history of the perennial powerhouse New England Patriots,

merger with the National Football League and became the American Football Conference.

The presentation highlighted memorable moments and players during the early years of the Patriots organization making a name for themselves in professional football. Gitlin shared a clip from 1961 where the Patriots got away with a win while a fan came onto the field during the last play of the game.

Clips also featured memorable players for the Patriots back in the 1960s and 1970s including Gino Cappelletti, Jim Plunkett and

Please see **DYNASTY**, page 4



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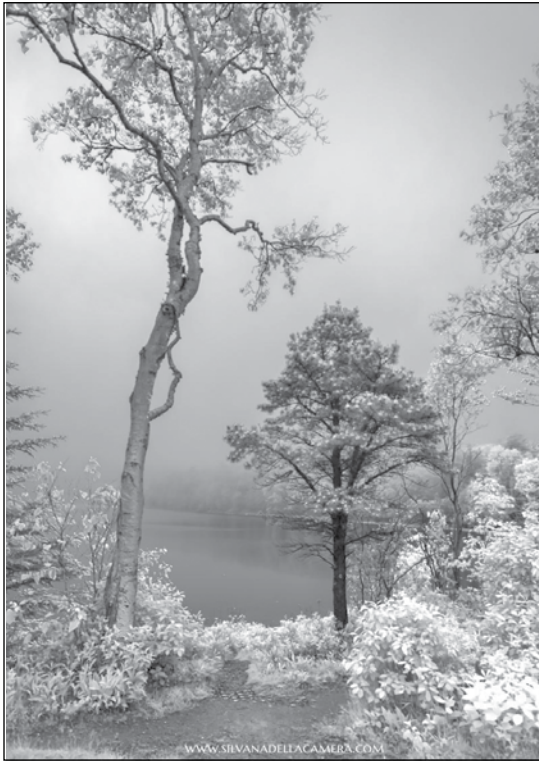
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The Power of Black & White



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Silvana Della Camera will be the featured presenter at the Feb. 26 Quabbin Photo Group monthly meeting.

Silvana Della Camera will present at monthly meeting

The monthly meeting of the Quabbin Photo Group will be held via Zoom on Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. with Silvana Della Camera, MNEC, presenting on “The Power of Black & White.”

Black and white photographs pack a forceful unnerving impact. Photos that deliver a timeless punch evoke nostalgia & inspire a lingering gaze.

When we think of this artistic style, the greats

Black and white photographs will be explored at Quabbin Photo Group’s meeting this month.

come to mind; Henri Cartier-Bresson, Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, among many others. The intensity of black and white is achieved through the clarity of a view without color.

By mastering colorless imagery, the subject of your photo becomes larger than the image itself. In this presentation, you will learn techniques of abstract realism.

The meeting is open to the public and guests can contact Gail Platz for the Zoom link at gspqpg@gmail.com.

Lindhult’s photography featured at library

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown resident and photographer, Mark Lindhult, is having an exhibit of his photographs at the Clapp Memorial Library for the month of February.

There will be 16 photos on display with half illustrating the changing nature of light in the Quabbin Reservoir and the others showcasing area birds and wild-

life. Lindhult has had numerous exhibits in area galleries and has given permission to nonprofits to use his images such as the Friends of Quabbin, the Kestrel Land Trust and Massachusetts Rivers Alliance.

Lindhult will be giving a lecture at the library on the fundamentals of photography and composition on Saturday, Feb. 24, at

2 p.m. and running a workshop on Saturday, March 2, at 2 p.m. in preparation for the upcoming Belchertown photography contest. Budding photographers of all ages are welcome whether you are using a phone or a mirrorless camera.

You can see more examples of Lindhult’s photographs at marklindhult.com.

Belchertown Community TV Schedule Highlights

- Thursday, Feb. 15**
 - 8 a.m. – Conservation Commission – Feb. 12 meeting
 - 10 a.m. – Planning Board – Feb. 13 meeting
 - 7 p.m. – Energy and Sustainability – Channel 192
 - 7 p.m. – Conservation Commission – Feb. 12 meeting
 - 9 p.m. – Planning Board – Feb. 13 meeting
- Friday, Feb. 16**
 - 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 9 a.m. – Hope United Methodist Church
 - 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 6 p.m. – Hope United Methodist Church
- Saturday, Feb. 17**
 - 8 a.m. – Clapp Library: Lego Dan
 - 9:30 a.m. – Hospice: What is It?
 - 11 a.m. – Hospice: Grief
 - 12:30 p.m. – Hospice: Making the Right Choice
 - 4:30 p.m. – Clapp Library: Lego Dan
 - 7 p.m. – Hospice: What is it?
 - 8:30 p.m. – Hospice: Grief
 - 10 p.m. – Hospice: Making the Right Choice
- Sunday, Feb. 18**
 - 4:30 p.m. – St. Francis Roman Catholic Church
 - 6 p.m. – Christ Community Church
 - 7 p.m. – Hope United Methodist Church
- Monday, Feb. 19**
 - 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 9 a.m. – Nipmuck Corn Harvier
 - 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 6:30 p.m. – Select Board – Channel 191
- Tuesday, Feb. 20**
 - 8 a.m. – Hope United Methodist Church
 - 6 p.m. – School Committee – Channel 192
 - 7 p.m. – Community Preservation Committee – Channel 191
 - 9 p.m. Hope United Methodist Church
- Wednesday, Feb. 21**
 - 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 6 p.m. – BEDIC
 - 7 p.m. – Zoning Board of Appeals

Belchertown Democrats to elect delegates to State Convention

BELCHERTOWN – On Saturday, Feb. 24, at 10 a.m., the Belchertown Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus at Town Hall to elect delegates to the 2024 State Democratic Convention, where Democrats from across Massachusetts will gather to endorse candidates for statewide office.

This year’s convention will take place on June 1 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

Registered and preregistered Democrats in Belchertown may

vote and be elected as delegates or alternates during the caucus. Young people (ages 16 to 35), people with disabilities, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ+ community not elected as delegates or alternates are encouraged to apply to be add-on delegates at the caucus or by visiting massdems.org.

Those interested in attending the caucus can sign up on the BDTC’s website at www.belchertowndemocrats.org or via email at belchertowndemocrats@gmail.com.

STAGE from page 1

ing to the program’s listing on the Belchertown Recreation Department website.

Bishop said that this was the program’s first session in Belchertown, and that she also runs the Recreation Department’s Outdoor Learners program, which is beginning a new session this month and has listings available for March and April as well. Bishop also planned to have another session of Readers Theater starting up soon.

The first story performed on Monday, entitled “The Lost Angel”, was a heartwarming holiday-themed tale of a Christmas angel that runs away from home after suffering a broken wing, thinking that her family would no longer want her for their tree. Fortunately, the angel is tracked down, fixed up, and restored to her rightful place atop the tree, secure in the knowledge that she was always loved by her family.

The second short play was entitled “Heroes vs. Villains”, and was developed by the four actors

themselves.

In the show, the lightsaber-wielding protagonist, Luke, is attacked by the Evil Serena, who believes Luke to be responsible for the destruction of her home. Luke and the Princesses Grace and Jasmine track down Serena, and the trio explain to her that what happened to her home was not Luke’s fault at all, but rather the work of a certain Professor Applesauce.

As much as participation in these plays boosted the performers’ levels of confidence and comprehension, the stories themselves were also imparting valuable lessons about acceptance, conflict resolution and cooperation.

All four performers said they had already acted onstage before participating in this program,

experience that shone through during the shows. All four also expressed an excitement to continue with acting as they grow up.

Parents and community members interested in the Recreation Department’s offerings can go online to <https://belchertownma.myrec.com/info/default.aspx> for more information.

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GRANBY

Town Clerk shares info about voting, elections and more

GRANBY – Early in-person voting for the Presidential Primary on March 5, will be held at the Carnegie Building (old public library) located at One Library Lane on Saturday, Feb. 24 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Monday through Thursday, Feb. 26-29 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Friday, March 1 from 9 a.m.-noon.

Early voting by mail requires no excuse this is “voting by will” the last day to file a “Vote By Mail” and an Absentee by Mail application for the March 5 Presidential Primary is 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 27.

If you did not receive an application from the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Elections Division, you may download an application by going online to www.granby-ma.gov under the Town Clerk Department, or at www.sec.state.ma.us. You may also email the completed application with your signature on it to: town-clerk@granby-ma.gov this would be the quickest way for your application to be received.

Voters must have one of the following reasons to apply for Absentee Ballot. Absentee Voting ends on Monday, March 4, at noon in the Town Clerk’s office.

A registered voter who is absent from the voter’s city or town during normal polling hours

A registered voter with a physical dis-

ability

Religious belief

A non-registered voter who is absent from the state

An active member of the armed forces or merchant marines, their spouse or dependent

A person confined in a correctional facility or a jail, except if by reason of felony conviction.

Voter registration

If you are not a registered voter and wish to participate in the March 5 Presidential Primary the last day to register to vote for the Primary is Saturday, Feb. 24 at the Carnegie Building from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and from 3-5 p.m. at the Town Clerk’s office.

You may register anytime during regular office hours in the Town Clerks office, you may also pick up mail in voter registration forms at the Granby Post Office, or Granby Public Library, or register online with a valid MA Driver’s License or Mass ID by going to our town website www.granby-ma.gov under Town Clerk Department -voter registration.

Mail in forms must be postmarked by Feb. 24 to be eligible to participate in the Presidential Primary. If you are not sure of your voter status, please call the Town

Clerk’s office for verification.

Nomination papers

Any person interested in seeking elected office in Granby must take out nomination papers from the town clerk no later than Thursday, March 28 to be placed on the Monday, May 20 ballot. Please visit www.granby-ma.gov for all the positions that will be on the May ballot look under the town clerk department.

Dog licenses

Don’t forget to license your dog, according to town bylaws, Chapter IV.

The cost is \$6 for spayed, neutered, puppies and senior dogs over 10 years, and \$15 for others. To avoid a \$25 late charge fee, dogs should be licensed by May 1.

If you wish you may get a license by mail, please include a copy of the rabies vaccination or call the clerk’s office for verification, a self-addressed envelope with two stamps, a check made payable to the Town of Granby, and mail to Town Clerk, 215 B West State St., Granby, MA 01033.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to Kathy Kelly-Regan at the Granby Town Clerks office by calling 413-467-7178.

Lions Club offers ‘Groundhog Fuel Assistance Fund’

GRANBY – Once again this winter heating season, the Granby Lions Club has established an Emergency Fuel Assistance Fund for Granby residents.

This fund, titled the “Groundhog Fund,” will enable residents of Granby to obtain needed assistance for fuel to help them through the next six weeks of winter.

The Lions Club Groundhog Fund will begin helping residents on Feb. 2 and will continue until March 16.

Residents who would like to apply for needed assistance are asked to complete an application and these applications are available in the Senior Center/Council of Aging Office at 10 West State St. from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday; and at the Office of the Town Clerk at 215B West State St. from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m.-noon on Friday.

The Granby Lions Club appreciates the continuing support that the community of Granby gives to its projects and activities.

DYNASTY from page 1

John Hannah. Throughout the presentation, Gitlin would ask his audience trivia questions about Patriots players and the history of the team, wanting to test the knowledge of dedicated fans.

Gitlin showed clips of unforgettable moments in Patriots football, some positive and some negative. For example, the infamous roughing the passer call during a 1976 playoff game between the Patriots and the Raiders.

Looking back, the call has been questioned over the years and eventually viewed as a bad call and cost the Patriots the game.

In 1978, a pre-season game highlighted a sore moment in Patriots history when Darryl Stingley, wide receiver for the New England Patriots, was knocked out by The Oakland Raiders defensive back, Jack Tatum and never walked off the field.

Stingley was unfortunately paralyzed from the hit and spent the rest of his life as a quadriplegic. His whole professional football career he played for the New England Patriots.

The next player mentioned in the presentation was Patriots quarterback, Steve Grogan. For years, Grogan in the history of the Patriots was viewed as the “2nd best quarterback” of the Patriots. He played from 1975-1990. Grogan always had a love-hate kind of relationship with Patriots’ fans.

During Grogan’s time with the team, the Patriots shocked the sports world and managed to win the AFC conference championship and appear in the Super Bowl for the first time in 1985. Despite experiencing a blowout loss to the Chicago Bears, Gitlin believed the 1985 Patriots was a phenomenal football team.

In the 1990s, the Patriots got another chance at a Super Bowl by appearing in 1996 against the Green Bay Packers with

Drew Bledsoe as their quarterback. It was another year where the Patriots had a great season, but once again came up short in the biggest football game of the year.

The next part of Gitlin’s presentation was where the team transformed from a “doormat” to an eventual sports dynasty.

In 2001, the infamous injury of Drew Bledsoe was a scary moment for the fans and the whole team. However, the injury opened up the window of opportunity for backup quarterback Tom Brady.

Gitlin could only define Brady as greatness. Some clips in the presentation were from some of the Super Bowl games featuring Brady giving nothing but a clutch performance in those games. Gitlin’s favorite moment is the Patriots’ comeback in Super Bowl LI against the Atlanta Falcons.

“I knew they were still going to win even though being down 28-3 in the third quarter,” said Gitlin.

It is still debated by millions of sports fans around the world, but Gitlin believes

that many fans have accepted that Tom Brady is the greatest of all time.

Gitlin held a questions and answer period after his presentation and talked about some of his published books as an author. In 2020, Gitlin released a book called “The Ultimate Boston Red Sox Time Machine Book”.

Gitlin is originally from Cleveland, Ohio and loves sports and writing. He first started writing in high school and continued writing while attending Ohio University.

Gitlin started writing his own books in 2002 and was a sportswriter for the NFL in the newspaper field. He also covered the Cleveland Browns for CBS Sports from 2009-2012.

Gitlin now resides in New England and does about 40 presentations a month. One of his favorite memories in New England was going to Fenway Park at the age of 10 in 1967 to see a Red Sox game, which is often known as “The Impossible Dream” season.

Welcome

KELLY N. POULIOT, O.D.

Dr. Pouliot is a board-certified Optometrist who joined Kelly & Velazquez Eye Center in January 2024. She graduated from the Ramapo College of New Jersey with a Bachelor’s degree in Biology. She received her Doctorate degree from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University.

Dr. Pouliot has had over two thousand patient encounters upon completion of her clinical externships in the following specialties:

- Contact Lenses (Jacksonville, NC)
- Ocular Diseases (Johnson City, TN)
- VA Hospital (St. Cloud, MN)
- Low Vision Rotation (Philadelphia, PA)

Dr. Pouliot has a special interest in ocular/systemic diseases and other ocular emergencies. She is a member of the American Optometric Association and the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists. She is a native of the Pioneer Valley. She enjoys traveling and spending time with friends and family.



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AMHERST

Executive Director Claudia Pazmany announces resignation from chamber

AMHERST – The Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce regretfully announces the resignation of Executive Director, Claudia Pazmany, effective Feb. 28.

Pazmany has led the chamber for the past five and a half years, growing it to over 400 members while leading the chamber through the pandemic. The chamber will launch a search for its next Executive Director immediately.

“I believe in the power of a chamber, its ability and power to connect, collaborate and be a true catalyst for change and growth in the business community; I especially believe in our Amherst Area Chamber and all its capacity to connect the communities it serves. I arrived to this position with a commitment to bringing the chamber to its full potential. Together, we have accomplished that while redefining what true partnership looks like. I look forward to seeing its next stages of growth while I return to the field of philanthropy, to which I am steadily drawn,” said Pazmany in a press

release.

With Pazmany’s help, the Amherst Area Chamber has built a strong foundation with deeply rooted partnerships year after year and a dedicated staff focused on meeting the needs of its members and the business community.

The chamber has been proud to host valuable events for members and the broader community to network, enjoy incredible locations in the Greater Amherst area, and meet new people. Events such as Margarita Madness, the annual golf tournament and the A+ Awards have all grown in recent years.

Under Pazmany’s leadership, the chamber has established a Diversity Equity and Inclusion task force and has advocated with local town governments on items of interest to our members. The Chamber has continued its outreach to members in an effort to promote their businesses through workshops and monthly Arrive at 5’s networking events.

In 2023 Pazmany was recognized along with Gabrielle Gould from

the Amherst Business Improvement District, as a Difference Maker for their joint work on COVID relief for small businesses. Pazmany brought in critical funding to support the Chamber and area tourism, launching the “What’s Next Greater Amherst” marketing campaign.

Heidi Flanders, president of the Chamber’s Board of Directors, assured members and the community that the chamber remains dedicated to its mission throughout this leadership change, stated, “As the chamber works through the transition, the office will be fully staffed and we expect all programs and events to continue as scheduled. The chamber board and our robust committees will be assisting the chamber staff to ensure continuity. We want to wish Claudia the best as she pursues the next chapter in her journey and returns to her roots in philanthropy.

For more information about the Executive Director position, email info@amherstarea.com.

Chess Club begins for Tweens and Teens

GRANBY – Join the Granby Free Public Library, 297 East State St., to play the game of Kings and Queens at Chess Club with local chess enthusiast, Andrew Freidman on Thursdays from 3:30-5 p.m., Feb. 22, 29 March 7, 14 and 21.

For ages 10-18. The club will start

from square one.

Everyone can join and sign up at the door. Each class is limited to 14 players.

The Chess Club is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Granby Library. All library programs are free of charge and open to the public.

For more information, call the library at 413-467-3320 during open hours. The hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Thursday from 10:30 a.m.- 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

GRANBY from page 1

ous items that need repairs.

Their tractor requires some service in order for continued work on the 10 baseball and softball fields. Faria gave the total for both the repairs and a new set of blades.

Wage increases, water licenses and tests for water sources are the next steps for improvement that require room within the budget.

An internal tank inspection is required at the library (the first one

was done at the Fire Department), as it has to happen on a five-year rotation for safety reasons.

The department’s Ford F150 truck requires repairs, but there is concern that it may only get another year out of it. The board discussed replacing it now and what that would look like for the budget, and its positive effects for the department.

Other budgets

The board went on to discuss various other departments and areas that

needed to be discussed for budget adjustments including the selectman’s budget, and the computer budget so that an IT professional can analyze and improve it.

The audit and personnel budgets will remain relatively the same, and they were looking at increasing the Board of Appeals’ budget for the sake of increased advertising.

They continued to discuss various other departments and town organizations that need updates, and approved of various adjustments as needed.

BRANDING from page 1

The idea stemmed from a plan to develop an annual farm brochure with the Agricultural Commission and then expanded to include the creation of a template.

Haak-Frendscho said the template would allow “both flexibility for a range of uses while also giving consistency to the look and feel of the material in a way that will make it attractive for those variety of uses.”

Select Board member Peg Louraine asked if the form would be able to be customized.

Haak-Frendscho said there could be customization from icon, color or visual that would distinguish between

different groups, but would have “shared visual language and would have flexibility for a range of media.”

Select Board member Lesa Lessard-Pearson emphasized the importance that Haak-Frendscho work with the Communications Committee to create the template.

“I feel uncomfortable about doing that unless you’re working in partnership with the Communication Committee, they’ve done a ton of work. I don’t want there to be two different streams working on the same goals,” she said.

Louraine added that she thinks it would be important to speak with the Belchertown Fair Committee as well.

Select Board member Ron Aponte

asked Haak-Frendscho to explain the scope of the project.

“This would not be the entirety of branding for all external communications,” she said. “This is for templates for guides and brochures.”

Lessard-Pearson asked for Haak-Frendscho to create a document explaining the branding standards.

Select Board Chair Ed Boscher said this part of the process is the first step in the process.

“Obviously there is a lot more stuff that needs to happen before this gets final approval,” he said. “But I think as Maude is looking for a vote tonight, I think it makes sense.”

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New Spring Garden Flags



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OPINION



Gardening questions that pose a challenge

A recent visit to mom's house prompted the following question about poinsettias. Now, don't worry, I haven't forgotten what the date is. Sure, the poinsettia hasn't been in its glory for a few weeks now, but that doesn't mean she is going to give up on it.

You see, my mother likes a challenge, especially when it comes to plants. She wanted some advice on how to encourage new healthy growth before trying to coax it into re-bloom next fall.

Read on to learn how it's done:

In early April cut back the plant to eight inches. Fertilize with an all-purpose houseplant fertilizer once a month. New growth should appear by the end of May.

After the danger of frost has passed, move the plant outdoors. Continue to water but increase fertilization to every two weeks.

Pinch plants in late June or early July to promote bushy growth. At this time you may also wish to repot the poinsettia. Select a pot one size larger, filling around the root ball with a good potting soil.

Bring the plant indoors as temperatures fall in late summer.

The poinsettia is photoperiodic, and long nights of uninterrupted darkness encourage it to bloom. In greenhouses, growers go to great lengths to withhold light, as even small amounts can delay or stop the plant from setting bud.

At home, putting the plant in the closet for 14 hours each night is your best bet. Setting a reminder alarm or making a note helps to keep on track.

Most people get on a 5 p.m.-8 a.m. schedule beginning Oct. 1 and continue it for eight-10 weeks until color shows on the bracts. Night temperatures should be no higher than 70 degrees or flowering may be delayed.

This all sounds fairly straight forward. I think the biggest frustration for her over the years has been missing a night of darkness, especially near the end of the routine.

Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Still fun to try, however.

A friend of mine recently asked what I thought of the cloth grow bags that are all the rage right now. Although I haven't used them myself, another friend, Chris, has been gardening up a storm the last few years using these bags.

She has an amazing flower border that you would think is growing in the ground, but it is a collection of dozens of bags in various sizes, holding everything from cannas to dahlias, zinnias and marigolds. She has great success with potatoes and other vegetables, too.

Read on to learn about the benefits of these bags.

I guess the one benefit that I never thought of is breathability. Because the fabric is permeable there is good air exchange, the roots grow to the edge, are air-pruned and branch out.

This is altogether different than plastic or glazed ceramic pots that don't breathe and encourage tangles of roots that encircle the pot eventually becoming bound. When a plant is root bound, it suffers until it is repotted; not so with grow bags!

Another pro would be drainage. The grow bags hold only what moisture the soil can hold and the rest of it drains away. Sure, the flip side is that you will need to water often in times of drought, but it's nice to know that if we have another summer like we did last year, the plants won't rot, either.

Other more obvious benefits include portability, heat resistance and ease of storage. If you purchase bags with handles, you can move them around the yard much easier than you could if the plants were in heavy pots.

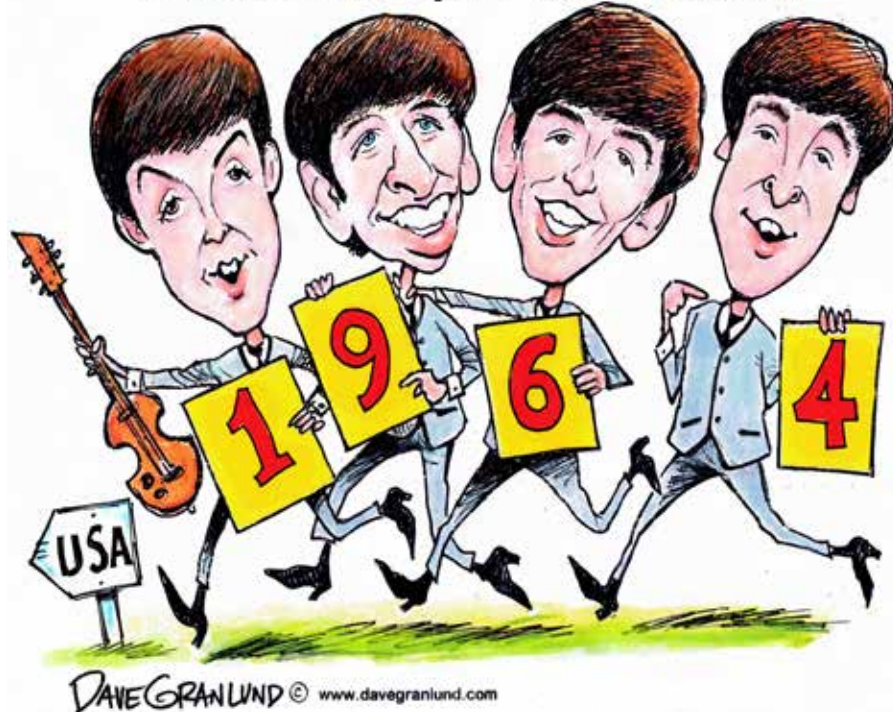
The bags weigh next to nothing compared to clay or ceramics. Grow bags also do not heat up the way glazed or plastic pots do; roots are cooler and the plants are happier.

When the season is over, you can wash the bags and flatten to store. Most brands say that they last for four-five seasons or longer with good care.

Do some research to pair the size bag you use with the plants you are growing. A quick check gleaned

Please see **GARDEN**, page 7

60th Anniversary of Beatles invasion



GUEST COLUMN

Drug Free Communities project work

BY REBECCA EDWARDS, DIRECTOR, Drug Free Communities Grant, Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance.

My name is Rebecca Edwards, and I recently joined the Town of Ware and Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance's prevention team to direct their Drug Free Communities grant.

Because this work is a community effort, I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself and share a bit about the work on which I hope we will partner.

The Drug Free Communities Support Program is a 10-year, federal grant managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance works across the spectrum of prevention, treatment and recovery in 18 towns in the region, our grant specifically focuses on teen substance use prevention in Ware, Warren, and West Brookfield.

What I mean by prevention is using evidence-based strategies and activities to help young people make healthier decisions by avoiding substances or by delaying first use for as long as possible.

We ideally want young people to delay using substances because research tells us that the longer they wait, the less likely they are to develop a dependent relationship with substances. If someone can wait until their brain is fully developed, around the age of 25, then they significantly reduce their chance of becoming addicted.

This is because the brain is like a puzzle, and from birth until 25 years old, puzzle pieces in the brain are coming together. When a substance such as alcohol, nicotine or cannabis is introduced during that brain development timeframe, the chemicals of that substance becomes part of the puzzle, making that puzzle piece harder to remove.

Once the brain is fully developed and its puzzle pieces are all in place, substances can be introduced with less risk. That said, using substances at any time of life is risky, and the type of substance, the frequency of use and potency of the substance all factor into how risky something is.

To make progress in reducing teen substance use, we implement evidence-based strategies. Gone are the days of "Just Say No."

We have much more nuanced and science-based approaches now; for example, we know that teens listen to their caregivers, even if it seems like they don't. Therefore, talking about substances regularly at home and setting clear boundaries and expectations does have a positive impact.

Another example of an evidence-based strategy is something called the positive social norms approach. This basically means that a lot more young people are choosing not to use substances than people think; teens and adults tend to overestimate how many youth are using substances.

We collect data and then share back some of the good news. If a teen realizes

how many of their peers are actually making good choices, it's easier for that person to jump on the positive bandwagon and make a good choice, too.

Youth mental health is another critical aspect of our work. Again, we implement evidence-based strategies to support teens' sense of belonging, inclusion, and safety in their communities.

We support programs and experiences that give teens hope for their future adulthood, as that also encourages healthy choices and mental wellness while being a teenager. It is a large task, but one we know is a pressing need in today's world.

Teen substance use prevention is not just youth work. Sure, we love working with teens and hope to do a lot of it! But this is truly communitywide work, because everyone in the community can play an important role.

Everyone can reduce access to harmful substances by safely storing medications and substances in their homes in a locking medicine box or by storing them up and out of sight. Limiting access is a proven strategy.

The community can host town-wide events which are substance-free. Store owners can post clear signs about carding practices and follow those rules steadfastly.

Adults can make the choice not to provide underage people with alcohol, nicotine or cannabis products or other substances. Everyone can educate themselves about the current substance landscape in order to be a source of knowledge and model healthy choices.

The Drug Free Communities team, along with the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance, is here to support individuals, families, schools, and the community at large. We are happy to organize trainings on a wide variety of topics, including parenting, cannabis and the developing brain, nicotine cessation, Youth Mental Health First Aid, how to reverse an opioid overdose, etc.

We take topic requests because we are here to meet your needs. We also can offer TIPS trainings to bars and restaurants who want their servers trained in responsible serving practices. We provide free naloxone, also known as Narcan, to anyone who wants it.

We are looking to grow our network and find more parents/caregivers, teens, and community members to partner with. If anything above interests you or you would like to talk more, please reach out to me, Rebecca Edwards, at redwards@townof-ware.com.

About QHSUA

The Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance is celebrating its 10th year anniversary as a coalition in 2024.

The Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance (<https://qhsua.org/>); a region-

Please see **PROJECT**, page 19

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in my BACKYARD
By Ellenor Downer



Fox sparrow

I received an email from a birder in Brimfield, who sends bird updates on a regular basis.

He reported an acquaintance in Hardwick have five fox sparrows visiting their yard this winter. He said, "Lucky them, I only see one or two fox sparrows in the yard during migration and didn't see any this year."

The fox sparrow is a large sparrow about 7 inches in length. It has rufous streaking and a gray head and back. The tail and rump are reddish brown and the underparts whitish with brown streaking. There is a central, irregular shaped dot on the breast

Like many sparrows, it feeds on the ground eating seeds, fruits and insects. It jumps forward and back pulling up ground debris to uncover food beneath. It may come to feeders where seed is scattered on the ground.

Fox sparrows inhabit deciduous or coniferous woods, brushy areas and wood edges. Their song is a short series of clear, melodious whistles.

The female lays four to six light blue green eggs in a cup like nest of grasses, lichens and leaves lined with hair fur and rootlets. The nest is placed on the ground under a small tree or shrub.

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident. He said, "[I] wanted to pass on some of my backyard action this winter. I was surprised to see five or six

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 8



SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor

How is my Social Security benefit calculated?

Dear Rusty:

I appreciate your recent article dispelling the myth that politicians have stolen Social Security money.

As a Certified Public Accountant, I dispel this myth repeatedly to clients, who falsely claim SS funds have been raided. But another thing I deal with often is how SS benefits are calculated. I know the formula for determining each person's benefit amount is complex, but I have had to explain numerous times that those, who put the most into Social Security get the lowest rate of return and those who put the least in get the highest return based on the way the benefit formula is structured.

I get tired of people complaining that monthly Social Security payments are higher for retired doctors and other highly paid individuals. Can you please explain how Social Security is weighted in favor of lower income workers?

Signed: Tired of the Misunderstandings

Dear Tired:

Please don't be frustrated. Because of the program's complexity, Social Security is prone to misunderstanding and educating the misinformed is an important professional duty we share. Here's how each person's SS benefit is determined:

The first thing to know is that each person's SS retirement benefit is not based on their financial contributions to the program. Social Security's purpose is to provide a benefit, which replaces a portion of the

person's pre-retirement income, so the SS benefit is based on actual lifetime earnings, not on the payroll taxes withheld from those earnings.

Social Security has your lifetime earnings record, obtained annually from the IRS and that record determines your "Primary Insurance Amount." Your "PIA" is initially determined in your eligibility year usually age 62 and is the amount you will get if you claim for benefits to start exactly at your Full Retirement Age.

To develop your PIA, Social Security first adjusts (indexes) each year of your lifetime earnings up to the annual payroll tax cap to account for inflation. They then select the 35 inflation-adjusted years in which you earned the most, from which they compute your average monthly earnings over your lifetime, this is called your Average Indexed Monthly Earnings. They then break your AIME into three segments, the first of which includes a majority of and possibly all of your AIME.

They then take a percentage of each segment and total those three amounts to determine your PIA. The first segment is the largest and 90% of that first segment contributes most of your PIA. Smaller percentages of the other two segments (32% and 15% respectively if your AIME is higher), are then added to the first computation to arrive at your full PIA - the amount you get if you start benefits in the month you reach your FRA. Note that since most of the PIA comes from the first large segment of each person's AIME, lower income workers get a higher percentage of their lifetime average monthly amount.

Since benefits are based on earnings, those with lower lifetime earnings do, indeed, get a smaller benefit than those with higher average lifetime earnings, but the percentage of pre-retirement replacement income lower income workers receive

is higher than for those with higher monthly average lifetime earnings. The Social Security benefit for lower income workers is typically about 40% of their pre-retirement average monthly income, while those with higher lifetime average earnings may get a benefit as little as 20% of their average monthly pre-retirement earnings.

In that sense, the Social Security benefit formula is progressive and weighted in favor of lower income workers. Nevertheless, albeit a smaller replacement percentage, higher income workers receive a higher monthly SS benefit because of their higher lifetime earnings. Even so, those higher earners did, indeed, contribute more payroll taxes from their higher earnings.

So, each person's SS retirement benefit amount is a percentage of their pre-retirement income. Coincidentally, those with higher pre-retirement income also contributed more to the Social Security program than did those with lower earnings. But their higher SS benefit amount is based on their higher pre-retirement earnings, not on payroll taxes paid from those higher earnings.

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.

GARDEN from page 6

that 10 gallon bags are good for three seed potatoes or a single indeterminate tomato plant. Bush type tomatoes would grow well in a seven gallon pot.

Also research the best potting soil or compost mixes to use; there are many out there. Chris uses a blend and uses organic fertilizers, crediting that to her success.

The apple may not fall far from the tree. Mom likes her challenges, and I like mine.

I think trying out grow bags is in my near (gardening) future.

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

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■ PUBLIC SAFETY

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 Jan. 31 through Feb. 6. 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 373 calls police responded to, there were 16 incidents, seven accidents, zero arrests/summons and 18 citations.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Wednesday, Jan. 31

4:21 a.m. – A resident spoke to an officer about a report of a past incident. The resident said they believed they were discrepancies in the case. It was found they did not affect the charges from the incident.

5:32 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Chauncey Walker Road. A vehicle hit black ice on a curve and slid downhill. The vehicle slid over large barrier rocks and came to rest on top of one in a field. No injuries were reported and the vehicle was towed.

2:02 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident. The operator of a vehicle was attempting to back out of a driveway at a residence. The vehicle was on top of hard packed snow and proceeded slide into tree. There was some damage to the vehicle. But there was no tow needed and no injuries were reported.

4:53 p.m. – An officer spoke with a resident about an incident of fraud. The resident got a phone call from their bank which reported someone was trying to open a new line of credit in their name. The bank denied the request. The person was advised to contact their other banks and freeze their accounts. The matter is on file.

5:55 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on State Street. A vehicle traveling east on State Street when a deer ran into the driver's side of the car. The vehicle was able to be driven from the scene. The operator sustained injuries but refused transport from the scene.

Thursday, Feb. 1

12:57 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident. A vehicle sideswiped another vehicle that was parked in a parking lot. There were no injuries reported and no tow needed. The owner of the involved vehicle said they were trying to get close to the entrance of a business and didn't notice the

parked vehicle.

4:23 p.m. – A parent spoke with an officer about allegations against their child. The incident was forwarded to the School Resource Officer to handle the matter.

Friday, Feb. 2

3:34 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person about a suspicious event. They were advised by a tenant that two unidentified workers came to the location to complete work in basement on hot water heater. Not aware of who they were. But the hot water not working properly contacted repair service to work on the problem. Officer is waiting for more information.

5:47 p.m. – An officer was on Ware Road checking for a vehicle Ware Police Department reported may need a wellbeing check on. The officer saw the vehicle matching the description provided by Ware and stopped the vehicle. The operator was transported to the hospital for further evaluation.

Saturday, Feb. 3

12:12 p.m. – An officer took a report of a washer and dryer in the roadway in front of a stop sign on Metacomet Street. There are no leads on how it got there. The Department of Public Works was contacted to remove the items.

3:08 p.m. – A resident called to document actions of their neighbor involved in a dispute. The person believed their neighbor was in violation of a harassment prevention order.

3:32 p.m. – An officer responded to a Turkey Hill Road business for a report of two mattresses that were illegally dumped at the property. The matter is an ongoing investigation.

4:16 p.m. – An officer took a report of a possible abduction of a dog. They reported someone went into their yard and approached their dog on a lead outside. The person outside was making statements that they were going to take the dog. The person then took the dog and began walking away. The resident stopped the person, who seemed confused and said they were helping the dog. The person told the owner they were taking the dog on a walk. The resident advised the person they couldn't take the dog on a walk without their permission. The officer determined the person had a misunderstanding about the dog. The matter was documented.

5:21 p.m. – An officer took a report of credit card fraud. The person got texts reporting suspicious activity on their card. The company took care of the charges, and a new card was issued to the resident. The matter was documented.

5:39 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident involving vehicles parked in shared

entry way between residences. One vehicle struck the other on the way out. The second vehicle had damage to the rear bumper on the driver side. Vehicle owners exchanged information prior to the officer arrival.

Monday, Feb. 4

7:21 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Bay Road. A vehicle traveling west on Bay Road was traveling south attempting to go exit a driveway when it was struck by a second vehicle on the driver's side. The second vehicle spun and came to a rest in the front yard of a neighboring home. Both vehicles were towed from the scene and no injuries were reported.

9:54 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on George Hannum Road. A vehicle traveling south on George Hannum Road skid off the road, attempting to get back onto the road, overcorrected, went into the other lane of travel and struck a pole. No injuries were reported no tow was needed. National Grid was contacted in regard to the pole.

1:15 p.m. – An officer and Belchertown Fire and paramedics and Belchertown Animal Control responded to a residence for a report of a person who was bitten by a dog. The person was evaluated but refused medical treatment.

3:08 p.m. – An officer took a report of fraud. A person got mail from their previous residence and it was an unemployment tax form. The person never filed for unemployment and requested the matter be on file.

Tuesday, Feb. 6

3:24 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on West Street and South Liberty. A vehicle traveling east on West Street was struck by a second vehicle traveling north on South Liberty Street. The first vehicle didn't stop at the stop sign and was speeded according to a witness. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 144 calls for the week of Feb. 2 through Feb. 8. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, Feb. 2

5:49 a.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed that the vehicle was traveling at 50 mph in 35 mph zone. The vehicle was stopped and it was discovered that the vehicles registration was revoked due to no insurance. The operator was issued a criminal citation for speeding, operating with a revoked registration and no insurance.

Belchertown Fire announces open burning season

BELCHERTOWN – Open air burning season for residential tree trimming begins Jan. 15 and ends May 1.

Residents can register at the Fire Department, 10 North Main St., from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. and on Saturdays, starting Jan. 20 from 9 a.m.-noon. There is a one time, \$20 fee to register for this season.

Please pay with exact cash or a check payable to "Town of Belchertown."

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection will only allow activation of burning permits for one day at a time, based on weather conditions. Renewal requests left on the answering machine are invalid.

For more information, please contact the Fire Department by calling 413-323-7571 with any questions.

Please note that the Belchertown Fire Department has full authority to revoke permits that are not used in accordance with Massachusetts General Law as well as authority to refuse burning on any given day based on weather conditions.

Monday, Feb. 5

2:11 p.m. – A resident received a phone call from someone claiming to be her grandson who stated he was in an accident and needed money. Before providing any money to the caller, they discovered it to be a scam and informed the police.

Thursday, Feb. 8

10:55 a.m. – An employee called and stated that some coax cable was stolen from the cellular phone tower. An incident report was completed.

3:55 p.m. – A motorist reported a three-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

10:12 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed that the vehicle was traveling at 58 mph in 35 mph zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding.

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

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Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661**.

Attention: Granby Landowners

Percolation tests for land in Granby may be conducted only during the months of March and April. Any property requiring a septic system must have a successful percolation test prior to building. Percolation tests are valid for two years. A \$200 fee is due and payable prior to the percolation test.

**Call Richard Bombardier at
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**Please call Board of Health office at
(413) 467-7174 for more information.**

BACKYARD from page 7

cowbirds along with a solitary red wing blackbird last week."

He has a lot more juncos around with the white throated sparrows. He said chickadees and nuthatches and the titmice population is down a bit He had a few starlings that stop by now and then along with cedar waxwings. He has not seen as many wild turkeys this year.

Golden crowned kinglet

A Brookfield resident emailed two photos of a golden crowned kinglet he took on Saturday, Jan. 27. He said, "Walking into my home, I spotted this tiny bird at the door." Tiny is an apt description of this bird as it is only 3 1/2 inches long.

More Brimfield birds

A frequent emailer said he read about the sighting of bluebirds and grackles in this column. He wrote, "Coincidentally we had a lone grackle in the yard last week. It showed up for a couple of days. I thought it was unusual to see just one grackle, they are most often seen in a group espe-

cially this time of year."

The Brimfield resident said, "When I mentioned to a friend from Belchertown that I had seen a grackle at the feeders he mentioned that he had a group of about 30 grackles visit his feeder briefly one day last week."

He said three days ago "I noticed a male bluebird at the feeders. It has visited daily since first being seen. The bird is feeding on suet cakes and a 'log' that is made of seeds, fruit and meal worms."

He counted over 70 juncos and four white-throated sparrows in the yard. He recently had three starlings, who seemed to like a feeder containing suet pellets. He said he rarely sees starlings at his feeders. He removed the feeder to deter the voracious eating starlings.

Bluebirds

This seems to be the year for flocks of bluebirds showing up at feeders. On Friday, Jan. 26 six or eight male and female bluebirds were at my suet cake, which contained fruits.

I removed the ice from a small dish like feeder, I use for mealworms, grape jelly or orange halves. The

bluebirds ate all the mealworms and I filled it again. They have been hanging around daily and I put out mealworms twice a day.

Tuesday, I looked out the window and saw several bluebirds perched on my car. One occupied a side mirror, another was on the roof and two on the hood by the windshield wipers. I think they may have been drinking the water from the melting snow on the car.

Later, when I looked to see if they were still there, a mourning dove was perched by the wiper blade.

Large flock of robins

A North Brookfield resident, who lives on Lake Lashaway, emailed on Friday, Jan. 17 and said she had a flock of 30 or more robins zoom in to the neighborhood.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



MONEY MATTERS

BUILDING FINANCIAL FUTURES:

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PV Financial Group takes a refreshing departure from the transactional norms of the financial industry. Instead of focusing solely on transactions, the firm's financial advisors prioritize cultivating strong relationships with their clients. This commitment ensures that every interaction is characterized by a delicate balance of care, skill, diligence, and objectivity.

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PV Financial Group boasts a team of trained and courteous financial profes-

sionals who collaborate seamlessly to provide clients with the highest level of personalized service. Through continuous training, the team stays well-informed and equipped to navigate the complexities of the financial landscape. The courteous approach reflects the firm's commitment to treating clients with respect and professionalism.

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Objectivity is a guiding principle in decision-making at PV Financial Group. Financial advisors maintain a clear and objective perspective, always acting in the best interests of the clients. This commitment ensures that recommendations align with each client's unique circumstances and financial objectives, fostering a relationship built on trust and integrity.

PV Financial Group, through its cli-

ent-centric approach, aims to be a reliable partner on the journey toward financial success for every client. With a focus on trust, effective communication, and a team of dedicated professionals, the firm is making waves in the financial landscape by prioritizing relationships over

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THE ROAD TO

Financial Wellness

The Benefits of Using a Financial Planner

In today's complex financial world, many investors seek out financial planners to help them navigate the intricacies of personal finance. The benefits of having expert financial help are manifold, including investment advice, retirement planning, tax strategies and estate planning.

Most financial planners collaborate with their clients to choose an asset allocation that melds the client's risk tolerance with their goals. After investments are chosen, often the advisor plays the role of cheerleader. Keeping clients from making rash decisions and veering off course from their financial plan may be one of the most important roles an advisor plays. All advisors have seen clients panic and try to make changes to portfolios in response to political or economic events that soon pass.

Retirement planning may be one of the most important acts that an advisor can perform. Everyone would love a stress-free retirement. A good planner can help calculate how much you will need to save to retire. He or she will also create a

strategy for claiming social security and any pensions in order to meet retirement spending needs.

An often-overlooked benefit of having a good financial expert is tax planning. Should you invest in a traditional 401k or a Roth? When should you begin withdrawing from your taxable accounts? Do you have to pay taxes on social security? When do you need to take Required Minimum Distributions and are you taking the correct amount?

In addition to all the above, proper estate planning is imperative to make sure that your assets end up where you would like them to, with the least amount of hassle. Do you need trust or is your will sufficient? Is your house protected from Medicaid in the future? Hiring a good financial expert can greatly enhance your financial life.

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Estate Settlement Tasks

- Entering the Will into probate, and handling other legal requirements.
- Gathering all of the personal property and arranging for support of the family.
- Obtaining appraisals of required property for tax purposes.
- Reviewing real estate records to assure timely payment of taxes and collection of rents.
- Evaluating contracts and leases to comply with all requirements, including giving necessary notices.
- Investigating and handling all claims against the estate.
- Collecting all life insurance, rents, and other amounts due to the estate.
- Preparing and filing estate and inheritance federal and state tax returns.
- Paying related estate and inheritance taxes.
- Preparing a final accounting of the estate.
- Distributing the estate to the beneficiaries as directed by the Will.

OBITUARIES

April Louise (Laventure) Cox, 59

MOORESVILLE, NC – April Louise Cox (Laventure), passed away peacefully on Feb. 6, 2024, in Mooresville, North Carolina, at the age of 59.



Born April 1, 1964, in Aurora, Colorado, she was the daughter of David Laventure and the late Carole Laventure. April was raised in Belchertown, and moved to Mooresville, North Carolina, in 2014.

April was a cherished member of the community and a beacon of love and joy to her family and friends.

April was the beloved wife of Steven Cox of 31 years, with whom she shared a profound and enduring love. Together, they built a life rich in laughter, raising their children, Matthew, Brittany, and Jennifer, to whom she was a devoted mother.

Her unwavering support and nurturing guidance have left an indelible mark on their lives.

She was the proud grandmother of Brandon, Ethan, and Gabriella, whose youthful exuberance brought her immeasurable happiness. April's role as a grandmother was one of her most treasured, and the memories she created with her grandchildren will continue to comfort her family.

Her love for children extended beyond her immediate family through her involvement in childcare. April's nurturing and caring nature touched the lives of many families, leaving an enduring legacy of warmth and kindness.

April is survived by her loving husband, Steven Cox; her son, Matthew Cox, and daughter-in-law, Belkys Cox; her daughter, Brittany Cox; her daughter, Jennifer Binkney, and son-in-law, Joshua Binkney; her grandchildren, Brandon Grenier, Ethan Cox, and Gabriella Cox; her sister and brother-in-law, Suzanne and Eric Markham; her sister, Sallyanne Laventure, her niece, Evelyn; her brother and sister-in-law, Michael and Maryanne Laventure; her nephew, David Laventure and his wife, Shinead Laventure. Her nephew, niece, and great nieces, Christopher Carter and Katarina, Melody, Sunni, and Luna. Her father-in-law, Bill Cox, his wife, Liz Cox, and many other beloved friends and family.

April had a passion for travel, with a particular fondness for Disney World, where she created enchanting memories with her family. The tranquility of Lake Norman held a special place in her heart, especially when enjoyed from the deck of her pontoon boat—a place where she found solace and happiness.

April Cox will be remembered for her love of family, friends, and travel and for her positive impact on those around her. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of her family and friends, and her memory will be cherished for years to come.

April was a member of Elevation Church, where she found spiritual comfort and community. Her faith was a cornerstone of her life and provided her with strength.

April's warmth, kindness, and loving spirit will be deeply missed by all who knew her, and her memory will be forever held in the hearts of those she touched.

The family extends their gratitude to Beers and Story Funeral Home in Belchertown, for their compassionate assistance during this difficult time.

Visitation will be held Friday, Feb. 23, from 4-7 p.m. at the Beers and Story Belchertown Funeral Home, 10 Maple St., Belchertown. A graveside service will be on Saturday, Feb. 24, at 10 a.m. at South Cemetery, 143 Mill Valley Road, Belchertown.

Donations may be made in her memory to the Duke Cancer Institute or St. Jude's Children's Hospital. For more information and to sign a memorial guestbook online, please visit beeraandstory.com.

Francis Stephen "Steve" Mercier, 80

BELCHERTOWN – Francis Stephen "Steve" Mercier of Belchertown and Estero, Florida, passed away unexpectedly on Jan. 23, 2024, at the age of 80.

Steve was born in Cambridge, on Jan. 27, 1943, to Eugene Mercier and Gabrielle (Prairie) Mercier. He attended Trade High School in Springfield.

His commitment, determination and honorable work ethic would later lead him to become the proud founder and owner of Steve's Alignment and Brake. It was soon clear by the following of his loyal customers that Steve was born to be the amazing auto mechanic he became, which led to a thriving business. He was highly respected by his customers, many of which became friends.

Steve was a hard-working man, always working tirelessly to support his family and serve his community. His love for his family was evident in the endless effort he put in every day to ensure they were taken care of in every way.

He was a man of genuine honesty, ethical character and principle. He was always a man of his word. He was tough but he had a soft side to him, albeit often reserved for those closest to him, a trait that became more pronounced over the years and something his loved ones enjoyed watching as it unfolded.

He had an amazing love for, and life with, his beloved wife Penny. The way he stepped up and took care of her when she became ill is something his daughters will always admire him for. After her passing, Steve showed up every single day for his daughters and grandchildren as if Penny was still guiding him.

Some of us are lucky to find love once, but Steve was blessed to have found it a second time with Denise Tabor, his partner for 15 years. Together they shared a life that brought them joy.

Denise continued to guide him in life and took extremely good care of him. Something his daughters are grateful for.

In his early years, he was a dirt bike rider and quite the hill climber. He was a great skier, spending countless winter weekends with his daughters on the slopes. He loved boating and met several of his life-long friends while cruising along the Connecticut River.

He was a very talented wood worker, spending countless hours in his wood shop building beautiful furniture pieces, including his great grandson's special bed.

He also loved to travel and explore. Cancun, Mexico, had a special place in his heart, where he was known as Señor Esteban to the locals. He traveled there for many years, making the most amazing memories with family and friends.

Upon retirement, he took up golfing. He would be the first to admit he was not the best at it, but he enjoyed it very much and made it his mission to perfect his game. He even got a hole-in-one this past fall.

When you are continuously doing the things you love that bring you joy, and surround yourself with the people you love, that is the only perfection needed in life, and Steve had just that.

For anyone that knew him, it goes without saying that he was a beer man. If you were stopping by to say hello to Steve, anywhere or anytime, he was going to offer you a cold one, whether it was from his fridge or a cooler he always had with him.

We would like to think that if Steve could tell us one last thing, it would be to "show up for life" and make sure to "rock and roll with the ocean". Steve

will forever live on in the hearts of those who loved him.

He is survived by his daughters:

Karen Mercier and her partner Christopher Bernardos, and Stephanie Chapin and her husband Robert Chapin, his beautiful grandchildren: Amanda Naccin and her husband Eric Naccin, Colin Vigneault and partner Mia Rizzo, and Kyle Vigneault and wife Natasha Sankalia as well as his great grandson, Lincoln Naccin. He will be missed dearly by his sweetheart Denise, and all her family that embraced him



with open arms. He grew very close to Denise's children and grandchildren and enjoyed the time he spent with his extended family very much. Steve also leaves his sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, several nieces and nephews, and many life-long and new friends, all of whom will miss him.

Steve was predeceased by his wife Penelope Mercier, his sister Claire Gurley and his son-in-law Kevin Douville.

Services will be held on Saturday, Feb. 17 to celebrate the life well lived of Steve. Calling hours will be at Beers and Story Funeral Home, Belchertown, from 10 a.m.-noon. Following the services, family and friends are welcome to celebrate Steve at the Ludlow Country Club where we can gather and share our fondest memories of Steve.

Death Notices

Cox, April Louise (Laventure)
Died Feb. 6, 2024
Services Feb. 24, 2024

Mercier, Francis Stephen "Steve"
Died Jan. 23, 2024
Services Feb. 17, 2024

The Sentinel
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

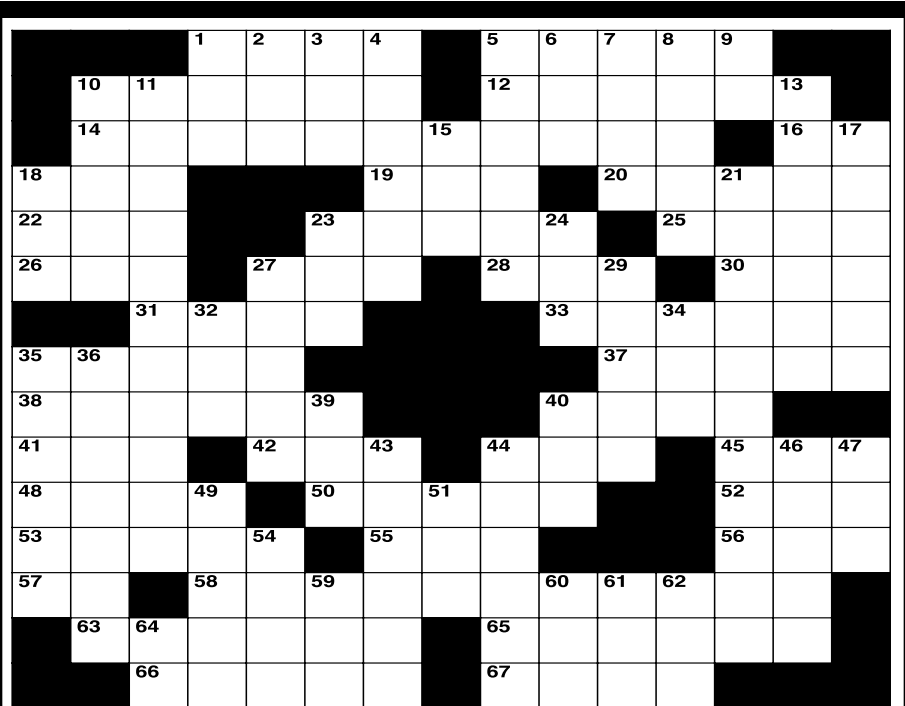
One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

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

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Gene type
- 5. Persian male given name
- 10. Type of protection
- 12. Cloud
- 14. One who returns to life
- 16. Gym class
- 18. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 19. Baby's dining accessory
- 20. Enchantress
- 22. Prefix denoting "in a"
- 23. Spiritual leader
- 25. Cavities
- 26. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 27. Foot (Latin)
- 28. Sweet potato
- 30. Pharaoh of Lower Egypt
- 31. Land
- 33. More inquisitive
- 35. Dog breed: __ Apso
- 37. Stood up
- 38. Direct and uninhibited
- 40. Authorless
- 41. Blocking type of drug (abbr.)
- 42. Retrospective analysis (abbr.)
- 44. Root mean square (abbr.)
- 45. Macaws
- 48. Actress Remini
- 50. Polynesian wrapped skirt
- 52. City of Angels hoops team (abbr.)
- 53. Fitzgerald and Baker are two
- 55. Bowling alley must-have
- 56. A way to cool down
- 57. Ethnic group in Asia
- 58. A way to alter
- 63. Set of five
- 65. Removes from the record
- 66. Dummies

CLUES DOWN

- 67. Set period in office
- 1. DC Comics superhero
- 2. Brew
- 3. Play
- 4. Single-celled animals
- 5. Rough to the touch
- 6. Small island (British)
- 7. Often noted alongside cons
- 8. Preparation of rootstock
- 9. Atomic #44
- 10. Egyptian unit of capacity
- 11. About secretary
- 13. Particular groups
- 15. Poke fun at
- 17. Make certain that something occurs
- 18. Financial term
- 21. Justify
- 23. Arbitrator
- 24. 007's creato
- 27. Czech name for Prague
- 29. Groans
- 32. American time
- 34. No seats available
- 35. __ Stahl, journalist
- 36. Cleft lip
- 39. Talk incessantly
- 40. Expresses atomic and molecular weights (abbr.)
- 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
- 44. Curdled milk
- 46. Running competitions
- 47. A team's best pitcher
- 49. Carthaginian explorer
- 51. World-renowned city
- 54. Most common Japanese surname
- 59. The bill in a restaurant
- 60. They __
- 61. City of Angels football team (abbr.)
- 62. Distinctive practice
- 64. One quintillion bytes

EDUCATION

WNE lists students named to fall Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University recognizes the outstanding academic achievements of over 700 students who have been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester.

This prestigious honor is a testament to the commitment and dedication these students have demonstrated in their pursuit of academic excellence. The Dean's List acknowledges those who have achieved a semester GPA of 3.30 or higher, showcasing their remarkable scholastic accomplishments.

The diverse group of awardees represents various majors across WNE's Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Engineering. The University com-

mends these students for their intellectual curiosity, leadership, and dedication to their educational journey. They are:

Amherst

Danielle Deangelis majoring in biology, Hamza Wahhas majoring in computer science, Robert Wargulewski majoring in computer science, Evan Stewart, majoring in criminal justice and Riwa Chehimi, majoring in computer engineering.

Belchertown

Kiley Queiros, majoring in psychology, Alyssa Keeler, majoring in actuarial science, Hannah Perlak, majoring in criminal justice, Tara Richards, majoring

in psychology, Natalie Loudon, majoring in marketing communication/advertising, Cameron Burnham, majoring in computer engineering, Devon Overgaard, majoring in electrical engineering, Heather Herrick, majoring in arts and sciences and Brody Dugger, majoring in arts and sciences.

Granby

Briyanna Coelho, majoring in biology, Eric Puffer, majoring in computer science, Alexander Galusha, majoring in computer science, Connor Asselin, majoring in sport management and Patrick French, majoring in mechanical engineering.

WPI announces fall 2023 Dean's List

WORCESTER – A total of 2,299 undergraduate students achieved the criteria required for Worcester Polytechnic Institute's fall 2023 Dean's List.

The criteria for the WPI Dean's List differs from that of most other universities as WPI does not compute a grade point average. Instead, WPI defines the Dean's List by the amount of work completed at the A level in courses and projects.

The following students were named to the fall 2023 Dean's List:

Amherst

Benjamin Haugsjaahabink, class of 2027, majoring in mechanical engineering; Jackson Lingo, class of 2026,

majoring in management engineering; and Delaney MacPhetres, class of 2026, majoring in business

Belchertown

Christopher Adzima, class of 2026, majoring in mechanical engineering and robotics engineering; Peter Elias, class of 2027, majoring in aerospace engineering; Jensen Gilbert, class of 2027, majoring in aerospace engineering; Megan Gilman, class of 2025, majoring in computer science; Abigail Rivers, class of 2026, majoring in biomedical engineering; and Olivia Vogel, class of 2025, majoring in biomedical engineering and mechanical engineering.

WNE announces fall 2023 President's List students

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University recognized the outstanding academic achievements of over 500 students who have been named to the President's List for the fall 2023 semester.

This prestigious honor is a testament to the commitment and dedication these students have demonstrated in their pursuit of academic excellence. The President's List acknowledges those who have achieved a semester GPA of 3.80 or higher, showcasing their remarkable scholastic accomplishments.

The diverse group of awardees represents various majors across WNE's Colleges of Arts

and Sciences, Business, and Engineering. The University commends these students for their intellectual curiosity, leadership, and dedication to their educational journey. They are:

Amherst

Students include Tyler Borrell, majoring in mechanical engineering.

Belchertown

Nicole Hubbard, majoring in criminal justice, Caitlin Bradshaw, majoring in elementary education/psychology, Laura Hastings, majoring in finance, Lindsey Chrabascz, majoring in general business, Olivia

Applegate, majoring in health studies/OTD, John Gelinas, majoring in law and society, Nicholas Adzima, majoring in mechanical engineering and Chelsea Bachmann-Delgado, majoring in psychology.

Granby

Carrick Remillard, majoring in computer science, Jack Hartling, majoring in computer science, Nicholas Parker, majoring in criminal justice, Dylan Laramee, majoring in mechanical engineering, Julia Frappier, majoring in pharmaceutical business and Cylie Kirejczyk, majoring in political science.

Dean's List students announced at WNE School of Law

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University recognizes the outstanding academic achievements of 60 students who have been named to the Western New England University's School of Law Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester.

Local students include Jordana Harper-Ewert, working toward a Juris Doctor, and Abigail Dallmann, working toward a Juris Doctor, both of

Amherst; and Natalie Maslak, working toward a Juris Doctor, of Granby.

This prestigious honor is a testament to the commitment and dedication these students have demonstrated in their pursuit of academic excellence. The Dean's List acknowledges those who have achieved a semester GPA of 3.30 or higher, showcasing their remarkable scholastic accomplishments.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Belchertown Conservation Commission LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to the authority of the Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, its Regulations (310 CMR 10.00) and the Belchertown Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Chapter 139), the Belchertown Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 26, 2024 at 7:00 PM in the Lawrence Memorial Hall Auditorium, located at 2 Jabish Street in Belchertown, MA 01007 to review a Request for Determination of Applicability permit application submitted by Gail Kosiorek for the proposed removal of hazardous trees at 47 Metacomet Street

(Assessor's Map 103-44) in Belchertown. Work is proposed to occur within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to Bank of Metacomet Lake. Anyone interested in this matter should appear at the time and place designated. 02/15/2024

Select Board

The Finnerty House One South Main Street, Post Office Box 670 Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0670 Telephone: (413) 323-0403 Facsimile: (413) 323-0494 BID #2024-01 FAIR VENDOR BID The Town of Belchertown will receive sealed bids labeled "FAIR VENDOR BID" at the Office of the Select Board, Finnerty House,

One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007, until 3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 23, 2024. At that time the Town Administrator will publicly open all bids. The Bid will be awarded in accordance with the Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30B.

Specifications and bid forms may be obtained at the Office of the Select Board, weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., or by calling (413) 323-0403. The Town of Belchertown reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids and to award the contract in the best interest of the Town of Belchertown.

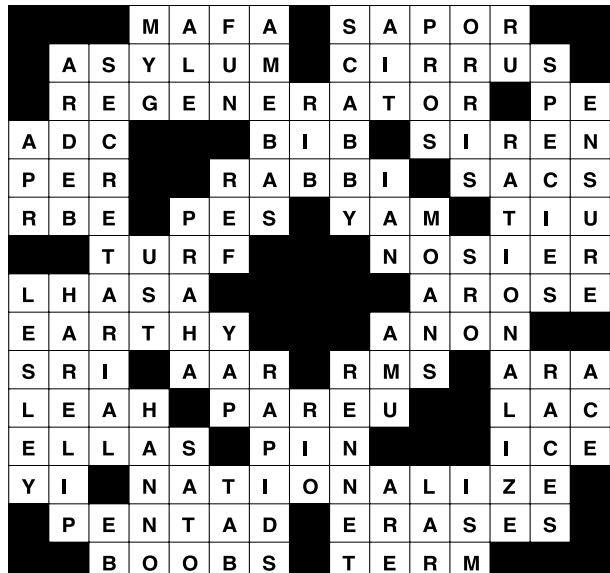
Steven J. Williams Town Administrator 02/08, 02/15/2024

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SPORTS

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Orioles suffer setback against Agawam



Cal Orzech goes for the layup. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

BY TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN—Following back-to-back losses to Suburban North League rivals Pittsfield and Taconic, the Agawam Brownies really didn't want to experience another setback in a non-league game at Belchertown High School.

Belchertown, who were trailing by seven points at halftime, scored the first ten points of the second half, and retook the lead in the middle of the third quarter. The Brownies managed to pull away during the final four minutes of the third quarter and in the fourth quarter enroute to a 78-61 road victory, last Monday night, Feb. 5.

"We're coming off back-to-back losses, so it feels great to come here and get a win," said Agawam junior Elijah

Maldonado. "The only other time that I played a basketball game in this gym was when I was a freshman. We came ready to play in tonight's game."

The Brownies, who had an 11-5 overall record following their road victory, haven't lost to the Orioles (7-9) on the hardwood in at least the past ten years. They won last year's contest, 73-52, at home and squeaked out a 55-50 road win two years ago, which was Maldonado's freshman season.

Maldonado, along with senior Colin Smith combined for 53 of the Brownies 78 points.

Smith scored 17 of his game-high 27 points during the second half, while Maldonado provided the spark offensively in the first half scoring 16 of his 26 points. Maldonado had a total of four 3-pointers, while Smith made a pair of shots from beyond the arc.

Watching Maldonado and Smith perform was worth the price of admission, especially for the Agawam supporters, who made the trip north to Belchertown.

"Both of them are very talented basketball players," said Agawam head coach Tim Sheehan, who was previously the boys' varsity basketball coach a couple of miles down Rte. 202 at Granby High School. "They always play very well off one another. We also had some other guys play well and it was a much needed win for us tonight."

The Brownies also received key contributions from junior Melih Tomak (6 points), freshman Gavin Cruz (6 points), junior



Jackson Couchon gets a fading jumper.



Tyler Marino takes a free throw.

Please see **ORIOLES**, page 16

T-Birds wins on 'Ice-O-Topes' Night

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Ice-O-Topes (22-19-3-2) rebounded from a 1-0 deficit to knock off the Hershey Bears (37-9-0-2) by a 6-3 score before a sold-out MassMutual Center crowd of 6,793 on Saturday night.

Neither team could find a firm offensive footing in the opening half of the first period, with both squads going 0-for-2 on their first two power play chances. 20 seconds after Hershey's second man-advantage expired, the visitors finally got the game's opening goal as veteran Garrett Roe crashed the top of the crease to jam a rebound through Malcolm Subban at 14:02 to make it 1-0 for the Bears.

The Ice-O-Topes' second power play came and went, but like the Bears, continuous offensive pressure paid off less than 30 seconds after the advantage concluded. Adam Gaudette made a quick change of direc-

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



Gavier Fernandez starts a play outside the arc.



Cody Breault holds the ball high before driving the hoop.

Rams comeback falls short

SOUTH HADLEY – Last Wednesday night, a high-intensity game between rivals Granby and South Hadley boys basketball was a low-scoring affair for three quarters before both teams started sinking more baskets in the final frame. The close game was taken by South Hadley 53-46. South Hadley needed the win to qualify for the state tournament while Granby has already qualified with a 12-5 record. South Hadley was led by Jack Loughrey and Brady Currier with 16 points. Granby got 14 points from Gavier Fernandez and 11 points from Colin Murdock.



Cody White rushes down the court.



TURLEY PHOTO
S BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
RIGHT: Sawyer Clarke passes the ball away.

SPORTS



Greenly Lagimoniere passes on the run.

Offense struggles for Pathfinder

PALMER – Last Tuesday night, the Pathfinder Regional girls basketball team suffered a tough defeat against St. Mary’s 39-30. The Pioneers struggled in the middle of the game, limited to just 10 points in the second and third quarters. The defense did a good job holding St. Mary’s to under 40 points, but the offense could not catch up. Addison Doktor had 11 points and Greenly Lagimoniere had 10 points in the loss. Pathfinder is 8-7 and needs at least one more win to qualify for the state tournament.



TURLLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Victoria Stephens looks for a teammate to make a pass.



Desiree Croteau is pushed out of bounds.



Megan Clark approaches the hoop from the side.

Railers pick up win over Mariners

WORCESTER – This season’s Railers have been imperfect, but indefatigable.

Twenty-fours after squandering a three-goal lead and losing in overtime to the Maine Mariners, 5-4, Worcester bounced back Saturday night with a strong effort and a 3-2 victory that was not easy.

Games with Maine never are. The Railers took a 2-0 lead late into the third period on goals by Artyom Kulakov and Anthony Repaci, then Maine closed the gap on William Provost’s goal at 12:57. Given the unhappy endings

of Worcester’s two previous games with the Mariners, things looked shaky; even shakier when Trevor Cosgrove was called for high sticking at 17:50.

However, Jake Pivonka hit an empty net at 18:54. Sigh of relief? Not quite. With goalie Shane Starrett on the bench and Cosgrove still in the box, Ethan Ritchie made it 3-2 with 37 seconds left. The Railers kept Maine bottled up in its own zone for the duration, however, and came away with two pure points.

Coach Jordan Smotherman was

not surprised with the way his team responded.

“We love our room,” he said. “You could tell (Friday) night, even after the game before they left, that the guys were ready to go. That’s one of the biggest differences between last year’s team and this year’s — these guys really want to be here.”

The victory extended Worcester’s points streak to four games. The Railers have earned seven of eight points in that time

Please see **RAILERS**, page 17

Bonsignore opens season with second-place finish

NEW SMYRNA, FL – Justin Bonsignore drove the No. 51 Phoenix Communications modified to a second-place finish in Saturday’s NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour opener at New Smyrna Speedway.

Bonsignore qualified fourth and ran inside the top-five for the duration of the race. After a pit stop in the final 20 laps, Bonsignore raced from fifth up to second, trying to chase down Ron Silk in the final laps. Although he closed in, he had to settle for second.

The run opened the 2024 season for Bonsignore, who will chase his fourth NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour title in the Ken Massa Motorsports machine this season.

“We were just a little bit too

snug on both sets of change tires,” Bonsignore said. “All in all, it was a really good night to start the year. We have to thank Phoenix Communications for everything they do for our team and Ryan Stone and the pit crew for a great job with a brand new car they built over the winter. It takes a lot to come down here to Florida to open the season. We will try and build off this and get better with this new car.”

Justin Bonsignore will return to the track driving the No. 30 for Rette Jones Racing in the ARCA Menards Series season opener at Daytona International Speedway on Saturday, February 17. The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is back on track at Richmond Raceway on Friday, March 29.

T-BIRDS from page 15

tion at the top of the slot area before funneling a shot toward the goal. Zach Bolduc made himself available for a deflection at the edge of the crease, and the rookie executed to perfection, squeezing it past Clay Stevenson to tie the score at 17:48.

With the game tied at 1 after 20 minutes, the ‘Topes parlayed Bolduc’s goal into a firestorm of offense in the middle frame. It began just 2:55 into the second, as Mathias Laferriere dropped a pass in the left circle for Kean Washkurak, who curled the puck to a better shooting lane and snapped a wrister through Stevenson’s five-hole to make it a 2-1 game.

1:35 later, Gaudette was in the middle of the action once again. After Hunter Skinner whipped a pass off Gaudette’s foot deep in the left-wing corner, Matthew Peca pushed a second-chance shot wide of the goal. With Stevenson still trying to recover back in front of the net, Gaudette used the opportunity to bank it off Stevenson’s pants and into the twine to extend the lead to 3-1. With the tally, Gaudette vaulted himself back to the top of the AHL goal-scoring race with his 25th of the season.

After a quiet stretch of play yielded nothing on the scoreboard, Hugh McGing changed things with a determined rush deep in the Hershey zone.

McGing’s pressure caused a mishandle between Stevenson and Dylan McIlrath, and McGing was there to jab a backhand through Stevenson, making it a 4-1 game at 15:24. The pesky winger now has seven points over his last seven games.

Former T-Bird Jake Massie gave Hershey a much-needed reply with a one-time shorthanded goal at 17:42, set up by Jimmy Huntington, and the defending champs were back within two heading into the third.

Chances heavily favored the Bears in the third to the tune of an 18-5 shot discrepancy, but Subban and the defense bent without breaking, and Will Bitten added some extra insurance, beating Stevenson on a breakaway backhand through the wickets at 10:54 to make it 5-2.

The Bears’ power play would not allow the game to end quietly, as Alex Limoges redirected a Mike Vecchione shot through Subban at 13:30 to cut the lead to 5-3. However, in the end, the visitors ran out of time, and Dylan Coghlan snapped a 15-game goal drought by drilling an empty net with 48.6 seconds to play to make it four consecutive wins on Ice-O-Topes Night for Springfield.

Springfield next takes its game down to Charlotte for a two-game set against the Checkers inside Bojangles’ Coliseum next Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 17-18. Puck drop for both games is set for 4 p.m. in North Carolina.

ORIOLES from page 15

Owen Lavelle (4 points), junior Riley Jorgensen (3 points), sophomore Aiden Lavelle (2 points), senior Andrew Regnier (2 points), and freshman Matt LeTellier (2 points).

Agawam should be one of the teams who’ll be competing in the upcoming Western Mass. Class A tournament. They’ve already qualified for the Division 2 state tournament.

Leading the way offensively for the home team was junior Ian McDonald, who scored 11 of his team-leading 14 points in the first half. Nine of McDonald’s points came on 3-pointers.

“We received a nice offensive effort from Ian in tonight’s game. He made a couple of huge 3-pointers in the first half,” said Belchertown head coach Matt Stenius. “We’ve had a different leading scorer in almost every game this season.”

The other three double digits scorers for the Orioles were senior Tyler Marino (13 points), sophomore Shea MacLean (11

points), and senior Cal Orzech (10 points), whose father, Mike, is the longtime boys’ varsity basketball coach at Minnechaug Regional.

Marino also posted a double-double with 12 rebounds.

The Orioles, who have lost back-to-back games four times this season, are also hoping to play in both the Western Mass. Class B tournament and the Division 3 state tournament.

The opening quarter was a back-and-forth affair with six lead changes and two ties.

MacLean and McDonald combined to score 12 of the Orioles’ 15 first quarter points.

Maldonado, along with Tomak and Cruz, each scored four points for the visiting team during the opening eight minutes.

A Smith lay-up hoop with 20 seconds left in the first quarter gave the Brownies a slim 16-15 lead.

The score continued to switch sides at the start of the second quarter.

Belchertown took a 25-24 lead with a little more than four min-



TURLLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Ian McDonald goes for the short-range jump shot.

utes left in the first half when Orzech banked home a 3-pointer from the right side.

Maldonado responded with a 3-pointer before MacLean was fouled making a lay-up with 3:40 remaining in the second quarter. He made the bonus free throw giving his team a 28-27 lead.

The Brownies then built a 12-point lead with the aid of a 15-2 run.

Smith began the spurt with a 3-pointer before Maldonado made back-to-back steals resulting in a reverse lay-up and another lay-up basket after making a spin move in the lane.

“Elijah does things on the basketball court that amazes me sometimes,” Sheehan said. “He always works very hard out there.”

Lavelle added a short jumper before 3-pointers from Maldonado and Smith increased the Brownies lead to 42-30 with 1:30 left on the scoreboard clock.

The Orioles closed out the first half with a Marino lay-up and a 3-pointer from sophomore Jacob Pacunas (5 points).

Orzech, who did an outstanding job of organizing a pre-season basketball tournament with a couple of his teammates, buried a 3-pointer from the left corner 30 seconds into the third quarter.

The Orioles then made five of six shots from the free throw line before a MacLean put-back hoop gave his team the lead back at 45-42 with five minutes left in the third quarter.

“I’ve faced Belchertown many times over the years and those kids never quit,” Sheehan said. “I knew that they would make a comeback against us.”

The Brownies answered back with a 12-0 run. Smith scored nine of those points.

Maldonado hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer giving Agawam a 59-49 lead entering the final quarter.

The Brownies, who outscored the Orioles, 19-12, during the final eight minutes of the contest, held onto their double digit lead the rest of the way.

EDUCATION

Elms College to host 7th Annual Black Experience Summit

CHICOPEE – College of Our Lady of the Elms will hold its seventh annual Black Experience Summit in celebration of Black History Month on Friday, Feb. 23, from noon-4 p.m.

This in-person event, which will take place in the college's Veritas Auditorium, is hosted by the Elms College President's Office and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

For the second consecutive year, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield is co-sponsoring this year's summit.

"Forging Democracy: Black Womanhood and the Long March for Civil Rights" is the theme for the summit this year. We will explore the pivotal and foundational role that Black women have played in forging, defining, defending and preserving the very fabric of U.S. democratic ideals and practices," said Jennifer Shoaff, Ph.D., chief diversity officer at Elms College in a press release.

The summit's two keynote speakers - Brittney Cooper, Ph.D., and Kellie Carter Jackson, Ph.D. - were interviewed in the documentary "Stamped from the Beginning" that is currently streaming on Netflix. Excerpts from the documentary will be presented as the speakers share their scholarship and lead thoughtful discussions

during the summit. Cooper is a professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Africana Studies at Rutgers University. She is the author of the New York Times bestselling book "Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower," and has written columns for several national publications, including the New York Times, Time Magazine, Ebony Magazine, and Marie Claire.



Kelly Carter Jackson, Ph.D.



Brittney Cooper, Ph.D.

Jackson is the Michael and Denise Kellen '68 associate professor in the Department of Africana Studies and the chair of Africana Studies at Wellesley College. She is the author of the award-winning book "Force & Freedom: Black Abolitionists and the Politics of Violence," and her essays have been featured in the New York Times, The Atlantic, The Guardian, and the Boston Globe.

During the summit, Lyrical Faith, a Black American educator, activist, and poet, will present a spoken word presentation.

The free event is open to the public. To register for the summit, visit <https://www.elms.edu/events/black-experience-summit/>.

Mead Art Museum announces upcoming shows, accessibility enhancements

AMHERST – The Mead Art Museum at Amherst College will open four new exhibitions over the next six weeks.

The season kicks off on Jan. 26, when the museum reopens to the public with "Like a Slow Walk With Trees: Alicia Grullón," a solo show of work by the New York-based multimedia artist, and a traveling exhibition of contemporary Caribbean art titled "Trópico es Político: Caribbean Art Under the Visitor Economy Regime."

On Feb. 27, the rest of the galleries will open with the seventh annual Black Art Matters student artist showcase, as well as a reinstated sequel to the fall highlight "Boundless," reinterpreting themes of the original through a smaller but more global selection of work by Indigenous artists and writers.

"The upcoming exhibitions thoughtfully explore intersecting themes including place, labor, human and environmental rights, and Indigeneity from specific perspectives," says Lisa Crossman, Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Mead in a press release. "In each exhibition, language and visual art come together to different ends, offering critiques and imagining new ways to consider historical and contemporary issues."

An opening reception for the season celebrating all four exhibitions will take place at the museum on the evening of Thursday, Feb. 29. Further details and more public programming will be announced soon.

In addition to the new curatorial offerings, the Mead is excited to share two updated accessibility measures. One is



Joiri Minaya, "The Upkeepers", 2021 an archival pigment print featured in "Trópico es Político: Caribbean Art Under the Visitor Economy Regime."

EnChroma glasses, which adjust vision for red/green color blindness; the other is KultureCity sensory bags, which alleviate overstimulation and sensory overload, creating sensory accessibility and inclusion for those with invisible disabilities.

Both the glasses and the bags will be available for visitors to borrow at no charge while at the museum. Beyond the sensory bags, the Mead became a KultureCity-certified sensory inclusive institution in November 2023 after staff training and a few space modifications.

Please see **MEAD**, page 19

Natalie Maslak named to Dean's List at WNE

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University announces that Natalie Maslak of Granby, has been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester.

Maslak is one of 60 students to achieve this mark of academic excellence. Students are named to the Dean's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.30 or higher. Maslak is working toward a Juris Doctor.

Belchertown resident earns Dean's List at Johnson & Wales

PROVIDENCE, RI – Zachary Mavlouganis of Belchertown was recently named to the Dean's List at Johnson & Wales University.

Mavlouganis is a freshman studying Food and Beverage Industry Management with a minor in Culinary Arts.

Full-time undergraduate students who demonstrate academic excellence by achieving a term grade point average of at least 3.50 while also earning a minimum of 12 or more GPA/credit hours, receive dean's list commendation.

WNE celebrates Doctor of Pharmacy students on Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University recognizes the outstanding academic achievements of 15 students who have been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester.

Local students include Belchertown residents Ashley McNamara, working toward a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and Abdullah Malik, working toward a Doctor of Pharmacy degree.

This prestigious honor is a testament to the commitment and dedication these students have demonstrated in their pursuit of academic excellence. The Dean's List acknowledges those who have achieved a semester GPA of 3.30 or higher, showcasing their remarkable scholastic accomplishments.



Emmanuel College announces fall 2023 Dean's List

BOSTON – In recognition of their outstanding academic achievement, Emmanuel College in Boston has named more than 900 students to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester including Jacqueline Gatesman of Belchertown and Ella Francis of Granby.

To earn a spot on the Dean's List, Emmanuel students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester.

Joseph Mankowsky named to fall Dean's List

PAXTON – Anna Maria College recently announced academic honors for students named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 Semester.

Local students include Joseph Mankowsky of Belchertown.

Anna Maria College awards Dean's List recognition to students enrolled in a full-time undergraduate day program in good standing who have attained in the previous semester a GPA of 3.5 with no grade lower than "B" for a minimum of four courses.

RAILERS from page 16

and have 48 points overall. That is five more than both Maine and Trois-Rivieres, tied for fifth.

Kulakov gave the Railers a 1-0 lead at 5:52 of the second period as he fired a 35-foot wrist shot past Starrett through a screen. Ashton Calder set him up with a great pass from the right side. Repaci scored shorthanded at 15:04 on a deflection in close.

John Muse improved his record to 9-3-1 with the win. He stopped 26 of Maine's 28 shots. Worcester has earned 19 of a possible 26 points with Muse in goal, a .731 winning percentage.

The triumph sent the Railers off on the longest road trip, time-wise, in franchise history. They will play six games in Florida, three in Orlando against the Solar Bears, then three in Fort Myers against the Florida Everblades. Worcester will be gone for 14 days and does not play another home game this month.

Florida in February — almost every New Englander's dream. Smotherman was asked if he was concerned that the Railers will look at this as a vacation, not a work assignment.

"One hundred percent," he said. "I've been the guy on the Florida trip before. I know how that works, but we trust our group, and that's the other part of it. They are professionals. They need to be professionals. Everything that we've seen so far is that they've bought in and they want to win hockey games."

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PROJECT from page 6

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Submitted photo. This is a still from Alicia Grullón's single channel video, "A Worker dies and goes to heaven", 2023. The video is part of the artist's upcoming show, "Like a Slow Walk With Trees: Alicia Grullón."

MEAD from page 17

About Mead Art Museum

Set in the heart of the Amherst College campus, the Mead Art Museum is home to robust programming rooted in experiential learning and critical thought, and interested in transformation at all levels—personal, social, institutional.

Drawing from a global collection of over 20,000 objects spanning five millennia, the Mead creates interactions between the museum, the campus, and the wider community through academic course collaborations and class visits, student internships experiences, special programming, and free public admission six days of the week.

The Mead will reopen for the spring on Friday, Jan. 26. Once open, the Mead is pleased to welcome visitors to the museum free of charge Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., with special extended hours on Thursday nights until 10 p.m.

More information on location, parking and transit, and accessibility may be found on the Mead's website at amherst.edu/museums/mead/visit.

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Looking for someone who is dependable and energetic with excellent social skills who likes working with people. You will be working with an adult female with developmental disabilities in a home setting in the hill-town area, providing 1:1 support in a self-directed day program. Responsibilities include working on achieving goals set through her program, assist with appointments, basic meal prep, basic hygiene and documentation on Microsoft Word.

This position is part-time Monday through Friday, 25 hours a week, pays \$21-\$23 per an hour depending on experience, and hours can be flexible. This would be an excellent experience for a college student going into the human service or medical field. You must be 18 years old, have valid driver's license, pass a CORI, fingerprinting check, have a clean driving record and good computer skills.

If interested mail or email your resume to: Multicultural Community Services 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109 or Lisapodworsi@mcsnet.org.

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Legislation helps access to medically necessary formulas

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representatives James P. McGovern (D-MA), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee and co-chair of the Cystic Fibrosis Caucus, and John Rutherford (R-FL), co-chair of the Crohn's and Colitis caucus, led their colleagues in introducing legislation to remove barriers to access for all Americans who require medically necessary foods to lead healthy lives.

The Medical Nutrition Equity Act would require coverage of specialized formulas, vitamins, individual amino acids, or other medically necessary foods under Medicaid,

the Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicare, the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program, and private insurance for patients with specific gastrointestinal and inherited metabolic diseases and disorders.

It is narrowly drafted to focus on individuals for whom medically necessary nutrition is the treatment for their diseases.

"I've heard devastating stories from constituents struggling to access medically necessary foods to keep themselves or their child healthy," said McGovern in a press release. "As a dad and husband,

I can't imagine not being able to access the food your child or your partner depends on to live. To me this is simple: no one should struggle getting medically necessary food, and insurance companies shouldn't be creating more barriers to receiving proper care. Our bill cuts through the red tape and ensures those with inherited metabolic diseases or gastrointestinal conditions can access the nutrition they need."

"Our health systems must be structured to support innovative treatments," said Rutherford. "As co-chair of the Crohn's and Colitis Caucus, where I advocate for those

living with digestive diseases, I am excited to join Rep. McGovern to introduce this important legislation that would make medically necessary nutrition more easily accessible to patients across our nation."

Approximately 2,000 infants every year are diagnosed with an inherited metabolic disorder. When left untreated, inherited metabolic diseases or gastrointestinal conditions can cause the body to fail to absorb necessary nutrients and food can even become toxic.

An inability to access specialty formulas forces patients to go without adequate nutrition or seek hos-

pitalization to maintain nutrition levels. Already, 40 states require coverage of medically necessary nutrition, but coverage is highly variable from state-to-state and does not apply to patients covered by private sector health plans governed by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act.

This bill builds on the precedent of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act which improved coverage for medical nutrition for military families enrolled in TRICARE, so more Americans can access medically necessary nutrition.

Opioids and Opioid Rescue Training



- Understand what opioids are and why people become addicted.
- Address the stigma of addiction.
- How to recognize and respond to an overdose
- How to use Narcan (naloxone) safely and effectively
- Resources for help
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- Can be done at your location as a group presentation!
- Can be individual or small groups by appointment.

Join us for this in-person training at:

E2E (Education to Employment)

79 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082

On: February 26, 2024, at 4:30 pm

Presented By:

Kirsten L. Krieger RN, BSN

Public Health Nurse

(413) 967-9615

Email: kkrieger@townofware.com

Website: www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com

Please RSVP by 2/23/2024 to:

kkrieger@townofware.com

New Date and Time!

Training provided courtesy of the following organizations:

