



Students representing their home country of Turkey with Turkish Delight, kisir, kek, and pogaça.

## Appreciating culture and diversity at MacDuffie

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
epappas@turley.com

GRANBY – The MacDuffie School is a private school that is home to students from over 19 different countries, providing a space where all the students and their cultures can truly shine.

The school hosted an International Festival over the weekend, where students took part by making food, teaching an art form, or modeling a traditional dress from their countries.

Students were invited to sample the foods, ask questions of each other, and participate in a special event that called attention to and appreciate

Please see **CULTURE**, page 5



TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Try out some delicious, sweet street corn from Thailand.

## Town administrator search revived

**\$6.7M West Street School contract awarded**

By Melina Bourdeau  
Correspondent

GRANBY – The search for a permanent town administrator was revived and the West Street School building project advanced, reappointing and expanding the search committee and awarding the construction bid to a South Hadley contractor.

The Selectboard kept the five residents who served on a prior search, added two newcomers and set all their terms through June 30. A short time later, members voted to award the

long-discussed West Street building contract to Marois Construction of South Hadley and authorized acting Town Administrator and Police Chief Kevin O’Grady to sign the agreement.

### Search committee reconstituted

Select Board Chair Mark Bail opened the meeting by turning to the first agenda item: appointments to the Town Administrator Search Committee. O’Grady said he would notify the full seven-member committee and get them started.

Because no formal appointments had been made at the prior meeting, the board also reappointed

Please see **SEARCH**, page 11

## TAB teens put together successful food drive

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
epappas@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The teens at the Clapp Memorial Library got together at their monthly meeting last week to collect and put together the food donations from the community during the Love Your Neighbor Food Drive.

The teens organized the boxes and cans of food, and the items were donated to the food pantries at St. Francis, BUCC, Christ Community Church, and the little food pantries around town.

“I am always proud of my teens. They come up with great ideas for programming and service projects, and they

are enthusiastic about making our community, and the world, a better place,” said Teen Services Coordinator Ruthie Sterling.

The teens collected canned vegetables and soups, stuffing, peanut butter, boxes of cereal, and other items that will help the people within our community.

“It’s amazing to watch the community come together to help out neighbors in need! Every can of tomato sauce, box of pasta, and container of rice adds up and will directly benefit Belchertown residents,” said Sterling. “Winter can be a hard time for families and a hard time

Please see **FOOD DRIVE**, page 3

## Eagle Scout seeks to restore bridge

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
epappas@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – Giving back to the community is a quest that the scouts take very seriously, and for 17-year-old Zach Restucci, his quest to serve the community led him to the bridge on the walking trails at Scarborough Park.

“It’s a large area of conservation, and the story behind it was very interesting to me,” said Restucci. “I wanted to do a restoration project because I love restoration. I like that I can take



Zach Restucci is ready to take on the project of restoring the bridge at Scarborough Park.

something old and make it look brand new.”

The plans he had for the bridge were brought to him by the Conservation Commission through Conservation Administrator Sarah Fortune, and a representative from the Kestrel Land Trust, who answered his call to the local committees and organizations to see where help was needed.

Fortune led him back to the bridge on the walking trail that was in desperate need of restoration from someone who cared.

“I saw the bridge, and fell in love with it,” said Restucci. “I could see all the ways to

save it, and I wanted to do something hard and challenging, and this fit that for me.”

Restucci got on the project and began to research, putting together his final proposal for the Eagle Award. He gathered his list of needed supplies, including the wood to fix the bridge, as well as tools, and then brainstormed ways to seek out donations from local businesses.

Restucci met with the Conservation Commission last week to go over final steps needed in order to get the project started.

They are waiting to hear back from National Heritage, as the Conservation Commission shared its concern that the project would be within its vicinity, but not on or too close to an area where a protected and endangered plant is growing.

“I never saw this as a final project or just a bridge,” said Restucci. “It wasn’t just about the project, but about

Please see **EAGLE SCOUT**, page 5

## Polar Plunge makes return splash

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
epappas@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The last thing anyone wants to do on a cold winter’s day is

to jump into freezing cold water, but for the people who signed up for the Polar Plunge, they jumped in with glee.

Arcpoint Brewing Co. hosted the Massachusetts

Special Olympics again for a Polar Plunge in order to raise money for the organization and had the Mobile Plunge outside and ready for the jumpers.

The Special Olympics is dedicated to providing sporting opportunities to individuals with intellectual disabilities, to “[make] a more inclusive Massachusetts, one game at a time”, according to the website.

The Athlete Oath at the Special Olympics, “Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt,” is a reminder that the very idea of trying something is an attempt worthy of recognition.

The Special Olympics hosts Polar Plunges all across the state, and the money raised goes towards providing sporting opportunities for people of all ages with no limitations.

The Polar Plunge raised over \$10,000, more than last year’s \$8,000, and even

Please see **PLUNGE**, page 5



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Officer Senecal taking the plunge from the Granby Police Department in uniform.



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**A beautiful bird perched proudly**



A beautiful bald eagle took a rest on a tree in Granby resident Jill Skibel's yard.

**Open positions for May Belchertown town elections**

BELCHERTOWN – The town election is coming up in May, and there are several positions available to run for across many boards and committees in town.

- Board of Assessors - 1 seat open with a 2-year term
  - Board of Assessors - 1 seat open with a 3-year term
  - Board of Health - 2 seats open with 3-year terms each
  - Housing Authority - 1 seat open with a 4-year term
  - Moderator - 1 seat open with a 3-year term
  - Planning Board - 1 seat open with a 3-year term
  - School Committee - 2 seats open with 3-year terms each
  - Select Board - 1 seat open with a 3-year term
- Nomination papers are now available in the Town Clerk's office and are due back by 5 p.m. on March 30, 2026.

**Get ready for more events at the library**

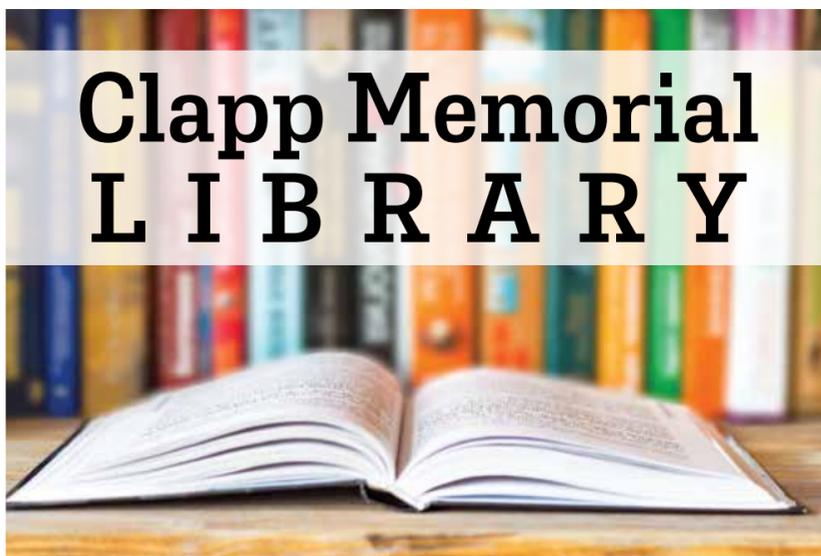
BELCHERTOWN – What's going on at the Clapp Memorial Library? Check out these upcoming events and programs!

**FOR GENERAL AUDIENCES:**

**BHS Art Reception**  
 Tuesday, Feb. 24, 6 to 7 p.m.  
 The public is invited to the Clapp Memorial Library for an Art Exhibit Reception for Elizabeth Teixeira's Studio Art 3, Studio Art 4, and Honors Art Classes at Belchertown High School. The reception will celebrate the young artists' work, which will be on display in the library throughout the month of February. Light refreshments will be provided. This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

**Pokémon Day All Day Event!**  
 Friday, Feb. 27

For the second year in a row, the Clapp Memorial Library invites the public to visit and celebrate Pokémon Day with fun for all ages! Take part in any of our themed activities to earn a raffle ticket for a Pokémon Prize Bundle! Activities include a Pokémon Scavenger Hunt, Pokémon Bingo, Pokémon Crafts and Pokémon Movie Night! Get all of the details about times and whether an activity requires registration on our website at [clapplibrary.org/event/pokemon-day-2](http://clapplibrary.org/event/pokemon-day-2). Please keep in mind that children under age 10 must be accompanied and continually supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the Library per our Unattended Child Policy.



**FOR ADULTS:**

**MassSave Pop-Up Resource Table**  
 Friday, Feb. 20, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Learn about no-cost Home Energy Assessments (HEAs) and other MassSave benefits for homeowners and renters. Stop by the resource table any time between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm. Representatives of HomeWorks Energy will help explain all the benefits and answer any questions. This program is funded by HomeWorks Energy, Inc.

**Honoring Tét: the Vietnamese New Year**  
 Friday, Feb. 20, 6 to 7 p.m.

Join educator and author, Dr. Edward Tick, to discuss the spiritual and communal meaning of Tét, the Lunar New Year, and how it is celebrated in Viet Nam. Dr. Tick will share how honoring this holiday helps bring healing to veterans of the Vietnam War, their family members, and to all of us in global relationships.

**What "YA" Readin'? Book Club**

Thursday, March 5, 7 to 8 p.m.

The library's What "YA" Readin'? Book Club, a group for adults who read Young Adult books, will meet to discuss *Twenty-Four Seconds From Now* by Jason Reynolds. April's book will be *One Step Forward* by Marcie Flinchum Atkins. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the circulation desk. New members are welcome!

**Coming Up! Mindfulness Meditation**  
 8 Week Course: Thursdays: March 12 - April 30, 7 to 8:15 p.m.

Clapp Memorial Library is once again offering an introductory Mindfulness Meditation and Stress Reduction Awareness course. Mindfulness meditation skills teach us to be fully present in the moment, help decrease stress levels, and improve general well-being and health. Registration is required. We ask that you register only if you are able to attend each session. Register online at [clapplibrary.org](http://clapplibrary.org) or call 413-323-0417. This course will be taught by Magda Bechar, a retired nursing professor who has taught mindfulness meditation skills to many groups, including at the Clapp Memorial Library, for many years.

**FOR TEENS:**

**Teen Book Club**  
 Wednesday, Feb. 25, 3 to 4 p.m.

The Clapp Memorial Library has a book club for teens in grades 7-12! On Wednesday, Feb. 25, teens will discuss *The Honeyes* by Ryan La Sala. Copies of the book are available for checkout at the library's circulation desk and on the Libby and hoopla apps. Snacks will be provided at the meeting. Email [clapplibrarytab@gmail.com](mailto:clapplibrarytab@gmail.com) with any questions.

**Pokémon Diamond Painting**  
 Friday, Feb. 27, 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Celebrate Pokémon Day at the Clapp Memorial Library! Students in grades 6-12 are invited to the library to learn the basics of diamond-painting their own Eeveelution drink coaster! All materials will be provided. Space is limited; email [clapplibrarytab@gmail.com](mailto:clapplibrarytab@gmail.com)

to register. This program, which takes place in the library's Activity Room, is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

**D&D Afterschool Adventures: Into the Abomination Vaults**  
 Mondays, Feb. 23 - March 30, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

Grab your dice and join us for our Spring Teen D&D Campaign! Brave adventurers are needed once again to delve deep within the Abomination Vaults and defeat the dangers below! For teens in grades 7-12. Teens who played in last year's Abomination Vaults may return with their same characters as the story progresses. No experience necessary. Space is limited and registration is required. Register online at [clapplibrary.org](http://clapplibrary.org) or call 413-323-0417. Confirmations will be sent out to students confirming enrollment or waitlist status. Please email any questions to [tmannino@cwmar.org](mailto:tmannino@cwmar.org)

**FOR CHILDREN: Children's Scavenger Hunt Every Month in 2026!**

*February's Theme: Dav Pilkey, Prize: Dav Pilkey Book Bundle*  
 We're inviting children to participate in a Monthly Scavenger Hunt! Look for book characters and write down the word you find with them. When you have all of the words, figure out the saying and enter to win the month's themed prize! One raffle ticket per child each month.

**Clapp Memorial Library Hours:**  
 • Monday 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
 • Tuesday 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
 • Wednesday 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
 • Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
 • Friday 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
 • Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**CAMPUS NOTES**

**Elms College announces recent local graduates in December**

- CHICOPEE – Elms College congratulates 60 students who graduated in December 2025.
- **Katerina Pruner** of Amherst received a Bachelor of Science. Elms College is a co-educational Catholic college offering a liberal arts curriculum that prepares students holistically for a purposeful life in a diverse and interconnected world. Founded in 1928 by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Elms College has a tradition of educating reflective, principled and creative learners, who are rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, responsive to civic and social obligations, and capable of adjusting to change without compromising principle.
  - **Arnold Ekajulo** of Amherst received a Bachelor of Science.
  - **Lucas Hunter** of Belchertown received a Master of Business Administration.

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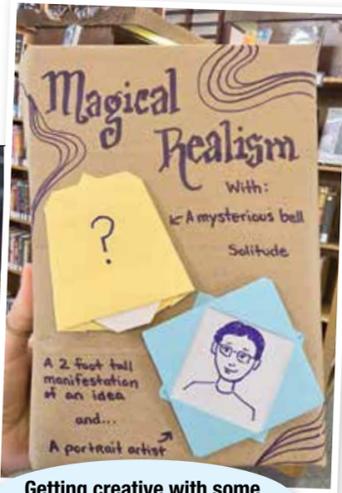
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# Choose your perfect book at Clapp library this month



**BELCHERTOWN** – Blind Date with a Book is back at the Clapp Memorial Library, and you can find an array of many books to choose from across many genres. Select your favorite art piece and prompt set done by Charlotte Cassidy, and get ready to dive into a new book.

The shelf is stocked with many books to choose from for a "date".



Getting creative with some origami on top of this book.



A stunning drawing of a building-careful not to rip this masterpiece!



You should definitely listen to this dancing skeleton telling you this book is fun.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

# Pokémon Day at the CML

**BELCHERTOWN** – For the second year in a row, the Clapp Memorial Library invites the public to visit and celebrate Pokémon Day on Friday, February 27th with fun for all ages! Take part in any of our themed activities to earn a raffle ticket for a Pokémon Prize Bundle!

### All Day: Pokémon Scavenger Hunt

Pokémon have taken over the library! All ages are invited to go on a scavenger hunt to find them in the building. 2:30 to 5 p.m. on the Main Floor: Pokémon Cross Stitch with Jon Rymaz

Learn how to cross-stitch a Pokémon! Jon Rymaz will demonstrate cross-stitching and assist others in learning on the main floor of the library. Preregister online at <https://clapplibrary.org/event/pokemon-cross-stitch/> and choose your Pokémon. Kits will be distributed on Pokémon Day. Walk-ins are welcome, but Pokémon options for walk-ins will be limited. This program is for ages 10+.

4:30 to 6 p.m.: *Pokémon Diamond-Painting for Teens and Tweens*  
Students in grades 6-12 are

invited to diamond-paint a drink coaster featuring Eevee or one of its Eeveelutions! Teen Services Coordinator Ruthie Sterling will teach the basics of diamond-painting. All materials will be provided. Space is limited; email [clapplibrarytab@gmail.com](mailto:clapplibrarytab@gmail.com) to register.

5 to 6 p.m.: *Pokémon Bingo*

Do you know your Pokémon? Patrons of all ages are invited to drop-in during this hour for Pokémon Bingo on the main floor of the library! Win a sticker prize! Patrons under 10 must be accompanied and continually supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the Library per our Unattended Child Policy. No registration is necessary.

6 to 7:45 p.m.: *Pokémon Movie Night*

We will end the day by showing the 2019 Pokémon movie featuring Ryan Reynolds as the voice of Detective Pikachu.

This film is rated PG. Patrons under 10 must be accompanied and continually supervised by a parent or caregiver while in the Library per our Unattended Child Policy. Register at <https://clapplibrary.org/event/pokemon-movie-night/>

# Open Door Open Mic Night

**WILBRAHAM** - Evangel Assembly is excited to announce our Open Door Open Mic Night, on Saturday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. at Evangel Assembly, located at 348 Stony Hill Road, Wilbraham in the East Wing.

This event is open to all, inviting guests to enjoy a night of diverse performances or take the

stage themselves for a five-minute performance of their choice. Whether you're a singer, poet, comedian, or storyteller, this is your chance to shine.

For more information or to register for a performance slot, visit <https://evangelassembly.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1120002>.

## FOOD DRIVE from page 1

for food pantries once the holiday season winds down, so I'm glad the community has shown up to help."

The teens worked hard to coordinate, organize, and put together the food, sorting it at their monthly Teen Advisory Board meeting, and there were several new faces to join in on the now annual tradition of hosting a food drive.

"When I was a teenager, my Girl Scout troop used to collect canned goods and nonperishables for families at Thanksgiving," said Sterling. "Watching the teens sort the donations to benefit their community reminds me of when my friends and I used to get together to make these



The food donations the teens collected throughout the week.

Thanksgiving baskets. I am proud to watch the next generation think critically about helping their neighbors and

ending food scarcity." The food pantries around town that the teens donated to are always seeking dona-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The teens fill up the Helpful Hutch outside of the town hall.

tions, from the regularly donated items like canned

goods and cereal, feminine hygiene products, and paper

products like plates, towels, and toilet paper are also asked for. Toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, body wash, shampoo, and other personal hygiene products are also in high demand.

"If you're able to, remember to donate to food pantries throughout the year as opposed to just the holidays. The need for food doesn't go away, and we all live safer, healthier lives when our neighbors and colleagues have access to food," said Sterling.

The food drive was a great success, and helped the teens organize a way for to help and uplift their neighbors, providing for them and showing them love.

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**Belchertown Police Log**

*Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of Feb. 6, through Feb. 12. 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.*

**ARRESTS/SUMMONS Friday, Feb. 6**

12:39 p.m. – A 69-year-old Springfield man was issued a summons for revoked registration, speeding and an uninsured motor vehicle. An officer running radar on Stebbins Street saw a vehicle going 49 mph in a 35-mph zone. The officer stopped the vehicle and found out the registration was revoked. The vehicle was towed from the scene. A criminal complaint citation was issued.

**Wednesday, Feb. 11**

1:54 p.m. – A motor vehicle stop resulted in a criminal complaint citation to a Ware man for a motor vehicle offense.

7:10 p.m. – A 20-year-old Belchertown woman was issued a summons for an uninsured motor vehicle, unregistered motor vehicle and license not in possession. An officer doing radar on George Hannum Road ran a query on the plate and saw a vehicle had revoked insurance. They stopped the vehicle. The person was charged accordingly.

**ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS Friday, Feb. 6**

2:40 a.m. – An officer conducted a building check and saw a parked vehicle in front of the property with out of state plates. The officer discovered it was the business owner.

3:26 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Mill Valley Road. A vehicle traveling south on Mill Valley Road struck a deer trying to cross the road. The vehicle was operable and left the scene. No injuries were reported.

2:46 p.m. – An officer was on patrol following up on a previous report was approached by a person who found a handicapped placard. The officer tried to contact the placard owner and left several messages. The person planned to pick it up later.

2:59 p.m. – An officer took a report of fraud. The person got a notification of a new credit account they didn't open. They didn't get notification from the company. They were told to freeze their accounts and contact the credit bureau.

4:35 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person about damage that occurred to a vehicle while it was being worked on. The person had the vehicle repaired and upon picking it up noticed there was damage. They contacted the person that did the repairs who initially denied it and then admitted to causing damage. The person said they would cover the cost. The officer said it was a civil matter, but it was documented.

9:17 p.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire paramedics.

**Saturday, Feb. 7**

3:57 a.m. – An officer responded to Clark Street for a report of multiple vehicles

creating a hazard for snow removal from DPW. They were violating a winter parking ban. The officer was able to locate the owners of two of the vehicles, but not the third. The third vehicle was towed from the scene.

8:01 a.m. – An officer responded to Warren Wright and Bay Road for a vehicle parked impeding snow removal. The owner was advised the vehicle needed to be moved. They told the officer they were unable to move the vehicle due to transmission issues. The owner was advised it would be towed.

9:01 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street and Bay Road. A vehicle going west on Federal Street was taking a right turn into a business parking lot. Due to snow and icy conditions, the vehicle continued forward and struck a snowbank and a PVTA sign instead. The vehicle was towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

12:01 p.m. – A person came into the station to surrender their LTC and then the officers went to collect their firearms and ammunition.

9:13 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Bardwell Street. A vehicle traveling east on Bardwell Street lost control and struck a snowbank. A relative came to help remove the vehicle. No tows were needed and no injuries were reported.

**Sunday, Feb. 8**

4:20 p.m. – An officer spoke to people concerning neighbor issues.

7:28 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street. A vehicle traveling north on Federal Street was struck in the front by an oncoming vehicle. The driver of the second vehicle said their view was obstructed. Both occupants of the first vehicle were transported to the hospital by Amherst Fire and Belchertown Fire. One vehicle was towed and the second was about to be driven from the scene. No other injuries were reported.

**Monday, Feb. 9**

7:50 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on North Main Street. A vehicle attempting to turn left into a

North Main Street residential driveway was struck by a second vehicle going south on North Main Street. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

8:06 a.m. – An officer responded to Federal Street for a report of a vehicle stuck in a snowbank. The operator of the vehicle said they were trying to turn on to Federal Street, so they overturned into a snowbank and got stuck. A tow company contacted to get the vehicle unstuck. It was driven from the scene.

12:22 p.m. – An officer took a report of a disturbance. It was a disagreement between a resident and caregivers.

3:28 p.m. – An officer took a report of fraud. A resident got a notification that a new credit account was opened and they didn't open one. There were also two purchases made with the card. They filed a dispute and wanted the matter documented.

6:02 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Stebbins Street. A vehicle traveling south struck a dog that ran into the southbound lane. The dog was deceased and the vehicle was able to be driven from the scene.

**Tuesday, Feb. 10**

3:31 p.m. – An officer responded to the area of Foley Field for a report of a person got their vehicle stuck in the snow. The area wasn't plowed but it was driven over a couple of times. The DPW was contacted to plow the pathway out and tow company was able to remove the vehicle. Its registration status was not active. It was towed to impound.

6:42 p.m. – An officer took a report of harassment. A person reported harassment from a former acquaintance.

7:10 p.m. – An officer responded to a residence for a report of a past domestic disturbance.

**Wednesday, Feb. 11**

12:38 a.m. – An officer on patrol was contacted by a person who was looking to access mental health and veterans' services. The officer gave them information.

2:02 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on West Street. A vehicle travel-

ing east on West Street began to slide when the operator couldn't navigate the sharp turn. The vehicle left the roadway and struck a rock. The vehicle was able to be driven from the scene after being winched out by a tow truck.

4:35 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street. A vehicle going into a Federal Street business parking lot was struck by ice that fell off the building. They reported it to the business and was told the property owner would need to be contacted.

**Thursday, Feb. 12**

10:07 a.m. – An officer took a report of vandalism at the trail head at Warren Wright Road. A vehicle's window was broken. There was a white SUV tried to park next to the vehicle. The driver's side rear door window. A "be on the lookout" order was put out for the vehicle. There is no other information at this time.

7:03 p.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire paramedics.

9:59 p.m. – An officer responded to Stebbins Street for a report of a deer struck by a vehicle. It was injured and euthanized.

**Granby Police Log**

*Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 155 calls for the week of Feb. 6, through Feb. 14. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.*

**Friday, Feb. 6**

2:34 p.m. – A resident came to the station to report a possible scam involving their computer. They did not give any personal information, and they were advised to check with their bank for any unauthorized transactions.

5:34 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

**Saturday, Feb. 7**  
10:10 a.m. – A motorist reported a minor two-car accident in the parking lot. There were no injuries.

10:15 a.m. – The Highway Department reported that two vehicles were parked on the road in the listed area blocking snow removal. The operators were ice fishing and advised to move their vehicles.

12:39 p.m. – A resident came to the station to report that their business checking account had been hacked. A report was taken.

10:40 p.m. – A motorist reported that they slid off the road and into a snowbank. Officers pushed the vehicle back onto the roadway.

**Monday, Feb. 9**

3:45 a.m. – A motorist reported that there is a car in a snowbank on Batchelor St with no one in the area. Officers responded and did not locate anyone. Efforts were made to contact the registered owner but unsuccessful. The vehicle was towed away.

7:29 a.m. – Several motorists reported a three-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries. Three car motor vehicle accident with air bag deployment.

12:35 p.m. – A motorist reported a vehicle drove off the road and struck a tree. Granby Police and Fire responded. The operator was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

3:02 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

**Tuesday, Feb. 10**

2:55 p.m. – A FED EX truck was rear-ended while making a delivery. There were no injuries.

10:55 p.m. – The Highway Department reported that a vehicle slid off the road. There were no injuries.

**Thursday, Feb. 12**

11:05 p.m. – A business owner reported a window was broken on one of their employees' vehicles and something was stolen.

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**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Cut quickly
5. A way to state clearly
11. River in NE Scotland
14. Expansive
15. Lacking social polish
16. Amount of time
17. Frame
19. Automobile
20. Toadstools
21. High school dances
22. Utilize
23. Experimented with
25. One-sided
27. Acquisitive
31. Potted plants
34. Everyone has one
35. Kalahari Desert lake
38. Unidentified flying object

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Brushed
2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
3. Heroes
4. Monetary units
5. Some don't want to share theirs
6. Free-swimming invertebrate
7. Litigates
8. Outer
9. Parallelograms
10. Uneasy feelings
11. Cross
12. A way to remove dog\_
18. Ukrainian city
24. A citizen of Denmark
26. Month
28. Hindu queens
29. Group of chemicals
30. Rider of Rohan

**CLUES DOWN**

31. Wet dirt
32. Southwestern Russia city
33. Observed
36. Angry
37. Drivers' licenses
39. Musical composition
40. Auction
43. They \_
45. Women
47. Be filled with love for
48. Thick-soled sock
49. Appears
50. Old World lizard
52. The leading performer
53. Protein
54. "Gunga Din" script writer
57. Art \_\_, around 1920
58. \_\_ Blyton, children's author
59. Abnormal breathing
63. A place to rest

**CULTURE** from page 1

ciated all the cultures present. "We have so many different cultures represented here, and they never get a chance to talk about themselves," said Keving Hillman, who teaches English, French, and ELL at MacDuffie. "When I came in, I said this needed to have food, music, and dance."

The school had been hosting a similar event before Hillman began teaching in 2012, but he helped it to grow and become much more, emphasizing and celebrating the individuality of these students through experiencing through the five senses rather than just with presentation boards.

"Working in a school like this, you have so many cultures and groups, and you get to learn from them. It's seeing the world come together in our little school," said Hillman.

The school also hosts a Diversity Day, where it takes on a more educational approach and happens during the school day. This Festival is a separate time for fun over the weekend that allows the students to step up and share what they love about their home countries with their friends.

"Anyone who comes here is going to get a truly authentic, international experience, all created by the kids," said Hillman. "I love watching the kids have to problem-solve and figure out how to make the event special."

The room was filled with staff and students, all learning from one another, eating delicious food prepared by the students, and taking a chance out of a busy semester and out of the hustle of



A delicious spread from Armenia, including Armenian lavash bread, BBQ vegetables, pomegranate, dried fruits, eggplant spread, and gata.

the real world, to learn about their neighbors and find something more to appreciate about them.



Learning Chinese calligraphy and how to create different characters.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS  
The room was packed with people ready to learn about the cultures of their classmates.



Cannonball!



Drying off and smiling as they choose "Freezin' for a Reason."



Diving into the cold for a cause.

**PLUNGE** from page 1

though the Plunge had to be postponed due to subzero temperatures, the actual day of the Plunge was perfect weather, with sunshine and 40 degrees.

"The best part of it was definitely community, and seeing everybody come together for a great cause. There were a lot of volunteers from Special Olympics who came, and the volunteers took time out of their weekend to come, and that is very, very special," said Dave Pare, one of the owners of Arcpoint.

The highest fundraising individual was Granby Police Officer Senecal, who took the plunge in full police gear and raised a total of \$1,845.

"After two years, we had



The crowd gathered and was ready for the Polar Plunge.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

more people jumping, and we raised more money. Our focus is the Polar Plunge, and it's our goal to make that a priority every year," said Pare. "Our goal is to really grow the event. If

we can get more people to come out every year, that's more money for the Special Olympics, and it's a win-win for everyone."

The water was a brisk 50 degrees, but jumpers still

came out to take the dive and put forward money for a worthy cause to support our neighbors and beyond.

**EAGLE SCOUT**

from page 1

the life lessons I'm getting along the way. This is a vision of 12 years of work that I am having translated through this project."

Through his time in Boy Scouts, Restucci has learned public speaking, leadership skills, organization, communication, and how to answer questions with confidence, and has been able to use these skills in real time in this project.

"I'm really challenging myself and all my skills so I can put it all into this project

**"It wasn't just about the project, but about the life lessons I'm getting along the way. This is a vision of 12 years of work that I am having translated through this project."**

– Zach Restucci

for the community to have a safer place to walk," said Restucci.

Through his time in Boy Scouts, he has learned how to engage with the public and

is learning life skills that will serve and help him and others in the future.

He is looking forward to hearing from the Conservation Commission, and getting started on this project as he seeks to aid the community, at the same time as preserving the dignity of this historical piece of land.

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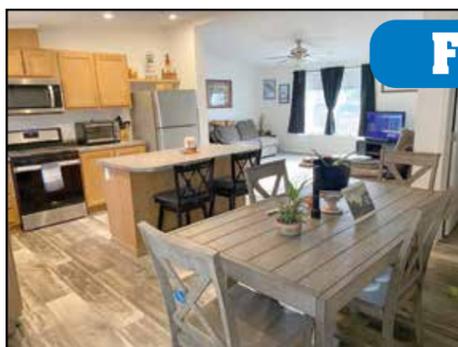
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## OPINION

### SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

#### I'm still working; Why didn't my benefit amount increase

Dear Rusty:

I have been working somewhat consistently since commencing my Social Security benefit income. I've been collecting since my full benefit age of 66, approximately. I'm now 81 and customarily, in about October of each calendar year, Social Security notifies me of additional benefits from my additional work. Not this year.

I earned some \$18,000-\$19,000 in 2025. SS advised I did not meet some 35-year formula. I thought that formula just applied to the original benefit calculation. Otherwise, one seems cheated given the SS taxes paid on income received after applying for benefits for that income. Please advise me.

Signed: Feeling Cheated

Dear Feeling Cheated:

For Your Information, your Social Security benefit is always based on the highest 35 years of your lifetime earnings with your early years' earnings automatically adjusted for inflation. And that formula continues even after you start receiving benefits. Social Security will look at your earnings each year to see if your recent earnings are among your highest. If so, they will automatically recalculate your benefit to give you a higher amount and pay you retroactively to the first of that year.

Apparently, in past years, your more recent earnings were among the highest over your lifetime, which is why you received those notifications in the fall of each previous year saying your benefit was adjusted based upon recent earnings. That you didn't get a similar notification this year, means that your earnings in 2024 were not among the highest over your lifetime, so no adjustment to your monthly benefit was appropriate.

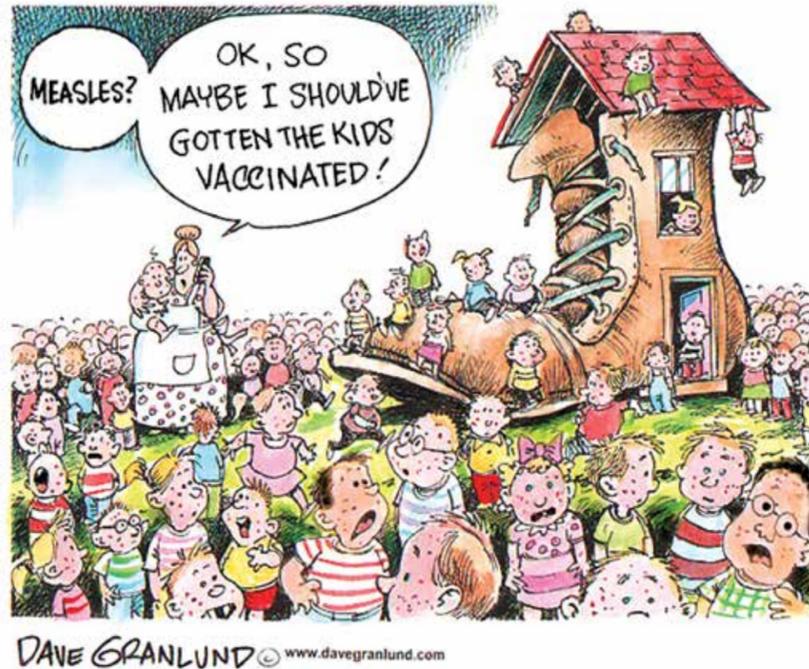
Now, to clarify, those annual notices you received in the past

always referred to the preceding year – that is, if you received a notice in October 2024 of a higher SS benefit, that was a result of your 2023 earnings. If you got no such notice in October of 2025, that means that your 2024 income was not among the highest over your lifetime. And your 2025 earnings of \$18,000 - \$19,000 will likely not be among your lifetime highest either, so you probably won't get a notice next year either.

It's important to understand that your contributions to Social Security, i.e., the SS payroll taxes you pay while working, are not put into a separate account for you - rather, they are used to help pay benefits to all beneficiaries.

In other words, just contributing to SS with payroll tax from your work earnings doesn't necessarily mean you get a higher benefit. Your SS benefit is always based upon the 35 years in which you earned the most, including recent years if you continue to work. So, you weren't "cheated" that is simply how the program works your SS benefit is always based on your highest 35 years of work earnings, including recent years, with earnings from the early years adjusted for inflation.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

#### What are shallots, anyway?

Shortly after the two-part column on growing onions, I received a question about shallots.

My friend was looking through a seed catalog and wanted to know the ins and outs of growing them. This topic was a fun one for me because it required some research.

Can you believe that the Garden Lady has never grown shallots before? There is an explanation why, with part of the reason being that I am not what you'd consider a fancy cook, and shallots have their place in fine dining.

The other reason is that admittedly I never understood the point of shallots – aren't they just small onions? Why would you buy something special for a recipe if you had a good old fashioned onion in the pantry?

As all the cooks in the audience gasp, let me qualify that statement with the fact that now I know better.

Shallots are slightly different plants from onions scientifically. Whereas the onion goes by the name *Allium cepa*, shallots are what you would call a cousin, with the Latin name *Allium cepa* gr. *Aggregatum*. Although the flavor hints of garlic (who is another more distant cousin), shallots are sweeter and more mild than onions, and are a staple in French and Asian cuisine where they can be used raw or cooked. Think delicate sauces or vinaigrettes.

I laugh when I picture all of the onion family members sitting around at a party. You'd have the gregarious onion, the boisterous garlic and then the cultured shallot, wearing a beret and speaking with a French accent.

I'm not sure why my mind went there, but it was a fun digression.

air movement to finish the curing process.

Once necks have shrunk and dried, cut the tops off to about one inch above the bulb and store in mesh bags as close as you can to the freezing mark with ample humidity. One interesting fact I learned from Fedco Seeds ([www.fedcoseeds.com](http://www.fedcoseeds.com)) is that if you don't have a room that cold, humidity can be adjusted to make up the difference for proper storage.

For example, best case scenario dictates that shallots need 34 degrees at 66 percent humidity. Say the coldest you can get your storage spot is 55 degrees, well then they would like 45 percent humidity. The closest you can get it to add up to 100 the better.

I wonder if this theory holds true for other crops in storage. My squash and pumpkin aren't the happiest this year, so maybe I will look into how to manipulate the environment to avoid some of the shriveling I am seeing.

Anyway, I hope you had a few chuckles reading this column and that you might feel inclined to give shallots, that cultured onion cousin, a try this gardening season.

*Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

in the Garden  
by Roberta McQuaid



A stunning photo taken of a doe in the forest.

now holds monthly meetings and educational programs for photographers of all levels.

Les Campbell (1925-

2020), who remained active with QPG well into his 90s, was a nationally recognized photographer whose

deep love for the Quabbin Reservoir inspired generations of local photographers. His legacy endures through the group's continuing mission to share nature images, learn from one another, and foster a greater appreciation for the natural beauty of the Quabbin region.

Today, the Quabbin Photo Group welcomes anyone with an interest in nature photography, whether beginner or experienced. Meetings throughout the year feature educational presentations, guest speakers, and "member nights," where participants share and discuss their work.

For more information, visit our website at [quabbinphotogroup.com](http://quabbinphotogroup.com) or contact QPG President Mark Lindhult at [mlindhult@gmail.com](mailto:mlindhult@gmail.com) or Program Chair Ed Comeau at [comeauphotography.com](mailto:ecomeau@comeauphotography.com).

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This newspaper will print free self-submitted statements of candidacy only four weeks or more out from the election. All candidates running in both contested and uncontested races are asked to submit their statements to the editor to include only biographical and campaign platform details. Total word count for statements is limited to between 300-500 words maximum. Please include a photo. We will not publish any statements of candidacy inside the four weeks from election threshold. To publish any other campaign publicity during the race, please contact our advertising representatives. We also do not allow personal attacks against other candidates or political parties in statements of candidacy, nor do we publish for free any information about key endorsements or political fundraisers.

Letters to the editor of no more than 250 words from supporters endorsing specific candidates or discussing campaign issues are limited to three total per author during the election season. No election letters will appear in the final edition before the election. We reserve the right to edit all statements of candidacy and letters to the editor to meet our guidelines.

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## Quabbin Photo Group to host presentation on wildlife tracking

BELCHERTOWN – The Quabbin Photo Group will be hosting a presentation at its February meeting featuring Outdoor Education Specialist Jack Bonafini from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. His presentation will focus on tracking deer, designed especially for photographers.

With nearly a decade of experience in the Hunter Education and Learn to Hunt programs, Jack brings deep field knowledge and practical insight into deer biology, habitat, food preferences, and tracking techniques. This session will give you a clearer understanding of deer behavior and movement patterns, along with real-world strategies for reading sign and interpreting the landscape.

You'll come away with tools and techniques to improve your chances of meaningful, ethical, and

respectful close encounters and to capture stronger, more informed wildlife photographs. Whether you're new to wildlife photography or looking to sharpen your field skills, this informative seminar will help take your work to the next level.

- Monday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m.
- Belchertown Recreation Department
- 66 State Street, Belchertown (behind the Belchertown Police Department)

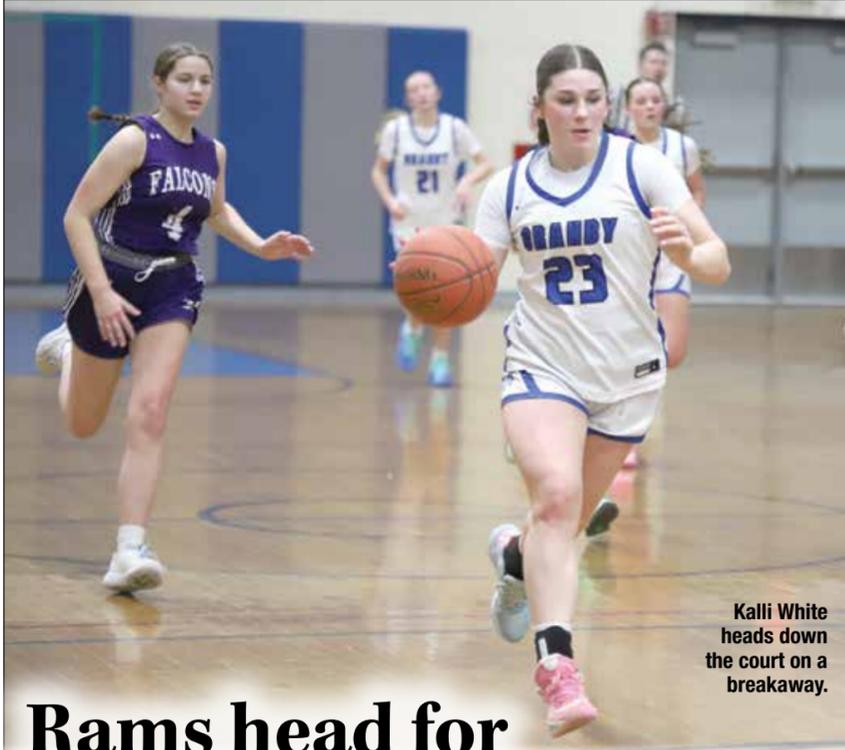
Founded in 1984, the Quabbin Photo Group traces its roots to the Belchertown Color Camera Club, which was established in 1948 by noted local photographer Les Campbell. What began as a small group of friends meeting in homes a few times a year has evolved into a vibrant organization that

# SPORTS

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Kalli White heads down the court on a breakaway.

## Rams head for Western Mass. finals

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

GRANBY—The Granby girls' soccer team has won the last two Western Mass. Class D championship titles.

Most of the soccer players are also members of the Lady Rams basketball team, which hasn't won a Western Mass. title since 2007.

The top-seeded Lady Rams hoop team advanced to the Western Mass. Class D finals after dispatching the fifth-seeded Pioneer Valley Regional Lady Panthers, 61-23, in a semifinal game played at Sullivan Gymnasium, last Friday night.

"This is the first time that the basketball team will be playing in the Western Mass. finals since I've been a member of the team, which feels really good," said junior Kalli White. "Almost all the players on the basketball team also play soccer, so we already have experienced playing in a championship game. We always wanted to win a Western Mass. title in

basketball."

Granby (17-3), who beat eighth-seeded Smith Academy, 55-42, in the quarterfinals, was scheduled to face third-seeded Pioneer Valley Christian Academy in the Class D finals.

"I'm extremely happy for these girls," said Granby head coach Dave Padavano. "They've worked very hard all season long and they deserve it."

Back in 2007, the Lady Rams, who were also the top-seeded team, defeated Lee, 62-46, in the Western Mass. Division 3 finals at the historic Curry Hicks Cage located on the UMass Amherst campus.

White, who scored her 1000th career point during the regular season, has compiled more than 100 points (goals + assists) on the soccer pitch. She'll enter her senior season with 90 career goals and 21 career assists.

White, who also excels on the lacrosse field, finished the semifinal basketball game

Please see **GRANBY**, page 8



Brenna Moreno attempts the layup.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Rowan Cook tries to grab the rebound.

## Pioneers fall against Franklin Tech

PALMER – Last Thursday night, Pathfinder Tech boys basketball was defeated by Franklin Tech 53-49 in a game that Pathfinder nearly came all the way back to tie. In the loss, Cassian Kowalik had a massive game with 28 points. He made seven free throws for the Pioneers. The Pioneers are still looking to qualify for the state tournament and need more wins this week to squeeze in.



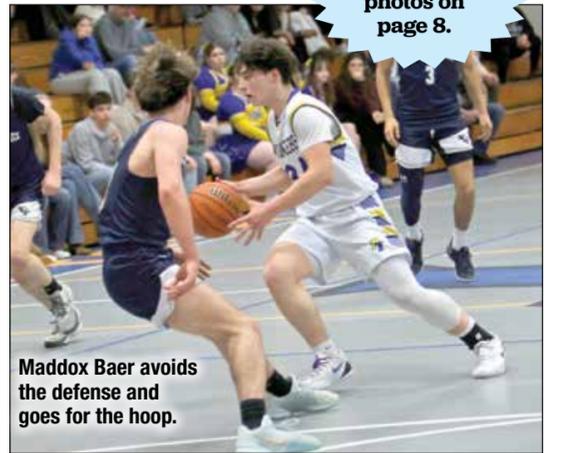
Dustyn Cook takes a free throw.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



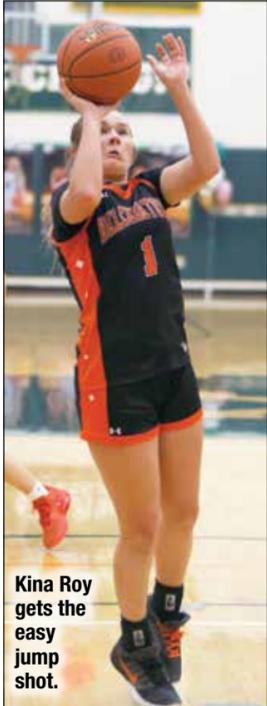
Ian Squi Nieves heads down the court.

See more photos on page 8.



Maddox Baer avoids the defense and goes for the hoop.

## O's offense shut down by Falcons



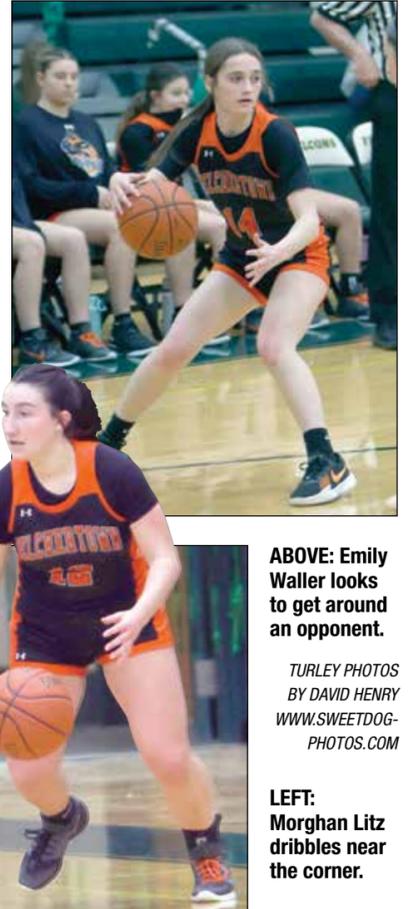
Kina Roy gets the easy jump shot.



Aubrey Klingensmith is pressured outside the arc.



Aubrey McCain shoots on the run.



ABOVE: Emily Waller looks to get around an opponent.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

LEFT: Morghan Litz dribbles near the corner.

WILBRAHAM – Last Monday night, Belchertown High School girls basketball suffered a power outage on offense at Minnechaug Regional, falling 67-21. In the

loss, Kina Roy managed just five points while Aubrey Klingensmith and Cassidy MacLean had four points each. Belchertown finished the regular season 9-9 overall. The

Orioles will need to win at least one of two nonplayoff games this week to qualify for the state tournament. They did not qualify for the Western Mass. tournament.

SPORTS

# Thunderbirds outslug Wild on road

DES MOINES, IA - The Springfield Thunderbirds (18-24-4-2) once again posted a prolific offensive showing, outpacing the Iowa Wild (13-28-4-1) for a roller-coaster 8-6 victory on Saturday night inside Casey's Center in Des Moines.

The opening 20 minutes were a roller coaster of emotions for both teams and their fans. Operating a man down in the opening minutes, the T-Birds still managed to break the ice, as Otto Stenberg beat Cal Petersen with a wrister from the left circle at 1:20 of the period, making it 1-0.

Normally a very disciplined team, Springfield succumbed to another penalty two minutes later, and Iowa made them pay as Tyler Pitlick jabbed a backhand rebound over Georgi Romanov to tie the game, 1-1, at 3:53.

Springfield quickly countered at 6:36, as Quinton Burns flipped a wrister that glanced off Zach Dean's blade, skipping through

Petersen to make it a 2-1 game in the T-Birds' favor. Jakub Stancl followed up 3:10 later with his second goal in as many days, finishing off a 2-on-1 pass from Hugh McGing to extend Springfield's lead to 3-1.

Like an evening ago, though, the Wild refused to go away, and Pitlick cashed in on his second of the period off a 2-on-1 setup by Hunter Haight to make it a 3-2 game at 15:14.

The one-goal deficit was short-lived for the Wild, as Thomas Bordeleau stripped the puck from an Iowa defender and rifled home a perfect shot past Petersen's blocker at 15:43 to make it 4-2. The goal was Bordeleau's first in a T-Birds uniform.

With just precious seconds remaining in the period, the Wild again responded in kind, as Nic Aube-Kubel set up Jack Peart in the left circle for a buzzer-beating tally in the midst of a delayed Springfield penalty, sending Iowa into the break trailing

by just a goal at 4-3.

Yet, despite the potential momentum changer from Peart, Springfield quickly responded to begin the middle frame, as Chris Wagner went to a knee to guide a power play feed from Matt Luff in behind Petersen at 1:32 of the second, making it 5-3.

The T-Birds' defense stabilized after the chaos of the first, and the offense continued its confident weekend, as Theo Lindstein cashed in for the second time in two games, punching a shot through Petersen's glove side at 9:15 off another Luff assist to push the lead to 6-3.

Springfield's power play added to their tally when Michael Buchinger whistled a shot through the legs of William Rousseau, who entered the net in place of Petersen to begin the third. Buchinger's fifth of the season gave the T-Birds a 7-3 advantage.

Even facing a huge deficit, the Wild continued to scratch and claw. A pair of

Springfield penalties opened the door for Iowa, and the home side took full advantage as Dylan Gambrell cashed in on a rebound to the right of Romanov at 8:04 to make it 7-4.

David Jiricek followed with a slap shot from the blue line that caromed in behind Romanov at 12:47, and the Springfield lead shrank to 7-5.

Things got even hairier for the T-Birds when Caedan Bankier got to his own rebound at 16:32 to beat Romanov along the near side, and Iowa incredibly got the lead shaved down to a single goal, 7-6.

In the end, though, Iowa's miraculous comeback attempt came up one tally short, as Luff delivered a much-needed empty net goal with 26 seconds remaining to seal the win. Luff and Stancl each finished their evenings with a goal and two assists, and Springfield's eight goals from eight different players set a club record for most goals in a game on the road.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Eleanor Szlosek goes for the three-pointer.

# Pioneers fall against Franklin Tech



Grayson Griswold eyes an open teammate.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGHOTOS.COM

INSET: Brody Wetnicka holds the ball outside the arc.



Cassian Kowalik gets the tip-off.

GRANBY from page 7

with a total of 34 points and 10 rebounds.

"Kalli plays well in almost every game, and we can't take her for granted," Padavano said. "She's a very special basketball player."

White came out of the game with 1:28 remaining in the third quarter and she didn't play during the fourth quarter. She finished with a total of 15 field goals, which were mainly lay-ups and inside hoops, along with four foul shots.

"Most of the time, the opposing teams would clog the paint, which makes it a lot harder to score," White said. "They left it open in tonight's game, which allowed me to do my thing. I also received a lot of nice passes from my teammates."

The Lady Rams' only other double digit scorer against the Lady Panthers was junior Brenna Moreno, who scored 10 of her 13 points in the second half. All three of the Lady Rams 3-pointers were made by Moreno, who also plays three sports, has racked up close to 50 career points as a member of the soccer team.

Freshman Rowan Cook (4 points), who's a member of the cross country and softball teams began the game with an inside hoop before White scored the next seven points.

Holding a 9-0 lead in the middle of the opening quarter, Pioneer Valley finally



Kaitlyn Curran tries to get around the defense.

broke the ice with back-to-back 3-pointers by senior Kyler McClelland. (11 points).

The Rams reeled off the next 19 points, which gave them a commanding 28-6 lead with 1:25 left in the first half.

Pioneer Valley freshman Maggie Tsipenyuk scored the final four points of the half.

White scored 16 points in the third quarter. She made a lay-up with 2:25 left in the third quarter giving the home team a 48-12 lead.

Kalli's younger sister, Kara, who's a freshman, also made a lay-up in the fourth quarter, which were her only points.

Rounding out the box score for the home team were junior Meredith Bartosz (1 point), freshman Ari Mislak (2 points), junior Eleanor Szlosek (2 points), and senior Kaitlyn Curran (3 points).



## Donate at new food pantry at town hall

The Helping Hutch, located at the town hall, is ready to be stocked by the community to help others in need.

# Enjoying the Magic at the COA



The guests for the show with Magician Rich Gilbert.



Every magician needs an assistant!



Magician Rich Gilbert getting ready for the show.

GRANBY - The Granby Council on Aging hosted a Magic Show, featuring The Magic of Rich Gilbert, and seniors had the opportunity to come out for lunch, and enjoy a fun and entertaining show.

## Granby Democratic Town Committee to hold caucus

GRANBY – The Granby Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus on February 28 at 11 a.m. at the Granby Free Public Library, 297 East State Street.

The committee will elect four delegates and four alternates to the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic Convention, where Democrats from across Massachusetts will gather to endorse candidates for state-wide office. The Convention will be held on May 29 and 30 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

The Democratic Committee welcomes participants. The caucus is open to all, but only Democrats registered in Granby can run for delegate. Registration will begin at 10:30 a.m., and the Caucus will start at 11.

The committee normally meets on the fourth Saturday of the month at the Granby Free Public Library. For more information on the caucus or the committee please contact Tobias Wilson at chair@granbydemocrats.com or visit their website at www.granbydemocrats.com.

## Rocky's Ace Hardware customers rally

Raising \$113,930 through Round Up for Kids

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. – A few cents at the register turned into a powerful show of community support as Rocky's Ace Hardware customers once again stepped up for children's health. This year's Round Up for Kids campaign raised \$113,930 across Rocky's locations, directing critical funding to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals serving the communities where customers live and shop.

The fundraiser ran during two high-traffic periods, one in the spring and another during the late fall and holiday season, giving customers multiple opportunities to round their purchase totals up to the nearest dollar. Those small contributions added up quickly, with Baystate Children's Hospital receiving more than \$23,925 from participating Rocky's stores in western Massachusetts.

"Round Up for Kids shows what happens when local communities come together around something bigger than a single transaction," said Rocco Falcone, president of Rocky's Ace Hardware. "Our customers understand that these hospitals are there for families on their hardest days, and they're proud to support care that can change a child's future."

Eight Rocky's locations in eastern Massachusetts took

part in the campaign. One hundred percent of the funds raised at those locations were directed to Baystate Children's Hospital to support pediatric care, medical innovation, and family-centered services.

"This campaign continues to grow because people believe in it," Falcone said. "Looking ahead, we're excited to keep building on this momentum and finding new ways to support the hospitals that do so much for our communities."

Children's Miracle Network Hospitals has raised nearly \$10 billion since 1983, helping fund vital treatments, research, and programs that improve the lives of children nationwide.

### About Rocky's Ace Hardware

Rocky's Ace Hardware, your neighborhood store for paint, hardware, lawn and garden, and grilling, has been in continuous operation, under the same family ownership, since opening its first location in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1926. From one modest store to now 51 convenient locations throughout Connecticut, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, Rocky's has become one of the country's largest Ace Hardware dealers, noted for its exceptional customer service and vast product selection. For more information, visit rocky.com.

## OBITUARIES

### Regina R. Wright (Dexter)

BRIMFIELD - Regina R. Wright (Dexter), born July 10, 1954, in Northampton, Massachusetts, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026, at the age of 71, surrounded by loved ones.

She was the beloved daughter of the late Richard and Ruth Dexter (Cleveland). Regina is survived by her daughter, Kimberly Wright, and her life partner, David Tolson, along with her four grandchildren, Benjamin, Hailey, Brooklynn, and Olivia Lamica. She is also remembered by her two sisters, Marlene Rule and her husband Robert, and Deanna Wiseman and her brother Richard Dexter II (Richie) and his wife Susan. Her memory will be cherished by her nieces and nephews and their families.

Regina graduated from Belchertown High School in 1972. After high school, she pursued a dedicated and much-loved career as a special education paraprofessional. Through the years she enjoyed volunteering to assist with events such

as the Special Olympics. Regina devoted her life to supporting and enriching the lives of others.

Regina's greatest joy came from being a Mother and eventually a Grandmother. She was known for planning the best parties and firmly believed that things should be home-made. Often spending hours decorating elaborate cakes for all occasions and planning party games and scavenger hunts. Being an active role in her daughter's life was extremely important to Regina; she was always the first to volunteer, from Girl Scout leader to softball coach, and so much more.

Regina had a passion for camping, first in a tent and eventually in an RV. She traveled all over the Northeast to give her daughter so many memorable experiences. She even once drove all the way to Florida with a pop-up camper in tow with her



daughter and niece to take them to Disney. As she got older, she especially enjoyed her camp up in Maine. She also enjoyed many traveling adventures and casino trips with her partner. She was a talented seamstress and had a knack for crafting. She also enjoyed playing in card leagues as well as playing games with family and friends, especially Scrabble!

Regina was a devoted Daughter, Sister, Mother, Grandmother, Life Partner and Friend. Her kind, compassionate, beautiful soul will be cherished by all she has touched.

Visitation will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026, from 10 a.m. to noon, with a celebration of life to follow at noon at Beers & Story Funeral Home in Belchertown. In lieu of flowers, donations in Regina's memory can be made to the Cure Alzheimer's Fund.

### Gilles Andre Gagnon

BELCHERTOWN – Gilles Andre Gagnon, age 92, died peacefully at home on February 7, 2026, in Belchertown.

Gill now joins his high school sweetheart, soulmate, and wife, Joan M. Gagnon, who together celebrated 62 years of marriage. His children and their spouses are Paul and Sue, of Denver, Colorado; Joe and Margie of Belchertown, Bob and Carrie of Wilbraham, and Doreen and Ray Cook of Purcellville, Virginia. Gill is survived by his sister-in-law, Jean Horne of Holyoke, and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Gill was Poppy to six grandchildren: Nick and his wife Emily, Jen and her husband LeRoy III, Michelle and husband Adam, Michael and wife Michaela, Caitlin and husband Charlie, and Joe and fiancée Taylor. Gill was Great Poppy to his seven great-grandchildren: LeRoy IV, Mia,

Brayden, Emilianna, Joey, Maddie, and Carter.

Gill is preceded in death by his sisters, Yolande and Antoinette DiBenedetto, and parents, Miliana and Joseph A. Gagnon.

Gill was born on September 4, 1933, in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Gill worked for the Holyoke Water Power and Northeast Utilities as both a Boiler Fireman and Operator for 35 years. While working there, Gill served diligently as a Union Steward, focusing on ensuring employee safety and securing and maintaining employee benefits. Gill resided with his family in Chicopee for thirty years before moving to Belchertown for twenty-eight years. Gill was a parishioner of Saint Mary's in Chicopee and then Saint Francis Catholic Church in Belchertown.



Gill was an avid camper, spending most summer vacations with family at Hampton Beach, N.H. In retirement, Gill loved his winter trips to Walt Disney World, staying in pool homes with Joan and the family. Gill was an avid sports fan of the Celtics, Patriots, and Red Sox.

A funeral Mass is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 21, at 11 a.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Belchertown. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Gill's life. Burial will be at a later date. Calling hours are Saturday, Feb. 21, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Heart Association at <https://www.heart.org/en/>. For more information, please visit [www.beersandstory.com](http://www.beersandstory.com).

## DEATH NOTICES

**Regina R. Wright (Dexter)**  
Died February 10  
Services Beers & Story Funeral Home, Belchertown

**Gilles Andre Gagnon**  
Died February 7  
Services Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home

## 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 \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

**Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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

## Spaghetti dinner to benefit Belchertown Scout Troop 507

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Troop 507 Scouts will be hosting a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Swift River Sportsman Club.

The dinner includes spaghetti and meatballs, garlic bread, side salad, a choice of non-alcoholic beverage, and dessert. Adults tickets are \$15, and kids aged 12 and under are \$12.

Tickets are available through purchase through Belchertown Troop 507, and for more information, you can contact Jenn Restucci at 802-735-4938.

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampshire Probate and Family Court  
15 Atwood Drive  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(413)586-8500  
Docket No.  
HS26P0051EA**

**Estate of:  
Robert Benedict Digris  
Date of Death: 11/21/2025  
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by William C. Digris of Warren, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that William C. Digris of Warren, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/11/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE**

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Diana S. Velez Harris, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 10, 2026  
Mark S Ames  
Register of Probate  
02/19/2026

**NOTICE OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE**

By virtue of and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Charles J. Lydon and Elaine A. Lydon to UMass Five College Federal Credit Union, said mortgage being dated December 5, 2014, and recorded in the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds in Book 11823, Page 134, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, upon the premises described in said mortgage, namely 89 Green Avenue, Belchertown, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage, to wit:  
THE LAND IN BELCHER-

TOWN, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS BOUNDED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

TRACT 1:  
BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SOUTHERLY SIDE OF GREEN AVENUE, WHICH POINT IS THE WESTERLY SIDE OF THE INTERSECTION OF GREEN AVENUE AND A RIGHT OF WAY LEADING FROM GREEN AVENUE TO THE PREMISES NOW OR FORMERLY OF GEORGE H.B. GREEN KNOWN AS THE "CARVER LOT"; THENCE RUNNING WESTERLY ALONG SAID GREEN AVENUE TWO HUNDRED SIXTEEN (216) FEET AND THENCE RUNNING IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION ALONG LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF WILLIAM CHARLES BELMONT AND WILLIAM BELMONT, JR. EIGHTY-THREE (83) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A STAKE; THENCE RUNNING EASTERLY ALONG SAID LAND OF WILLIAM CHARLES BELMONT AND WILLIAM BELMONT, JR. FIVE HUNDRED AND FIVE (505) FEET TO THE WESTERLY SIDE OF SAID RIGHT OF WAY; THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG SAID RIGHT OF WAY FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE (475) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. SUBJECT TO THE RIGHT OF ALL PERSONS LAWFULLY ENTITLED THERETO, TO USE THE RIGHT OF WAY WHICH RUNS ALONG THE EASTERLY LINE OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PREMISES.

BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO CHARLES J. LYDON BY DEED OF ELAINE A. LYDON DATED OCTOBER 14, 1977 AND RECORDED IN SAID REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN BOOK 1985, PAGE 67.

TRACT 2:  
BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF GREEN AVENUE, WHICH POINT MARKS THE WESTERLY SIDE OF THE INTERSECTION OF GREEN AVENUE AND THE BROOK THAT PASSES UNDER THE ROAD; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF GREEN AVENUE TWO HUNDRED TEN (210) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A RIGHT OF WAY LEADING FROM GREEN AVENUE TO THE PREMISES NOW OR FORMERLY OF GEORGE H.B. GREEN, KNOWN AS THE "CARRIER LOT"; THENCE SOUTHERLY FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE (475) FEET, MORE OR LESS, ALONG LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF ROBERT O. BLAKESLEE TO A POINT; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID OTHER LAND OF BLAKESLEE FIVE HUNDRED FIVE (505) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A STAKE; THENCE SOUTHERLY ONE HUNDRED TEN (110) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO A STAKE IN A STONE WALL (SIC); THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY THREE HUNDRED (300) FEET, MORE OR LESS, ALONG LAND NOW OR

FORMERLY OF WILLIAM CHARLES BELMONT AND WILLIAM BELMONT, JR. TO A STAKE AND STONE WALL, CORNER; THENCE RUNNING NORTHERLY ALONG SAID BELMONT PROPERTY THREE HUNDRED (300) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE AFOREMENTIONED RIGHT OF WAY; CONTINUING NORTHERLY ACROSS SAID RIGHT OF WAY AND ALONG LAND OWNED NOW OR FORMERLY BY SAID GEORGE H.B. GREEN FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY (450) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE WESTERLY SIDE OF THE AFOREMENTIONED BROOK; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID BROOK FIVE HUNDRED (500) FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING.

BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO ELAINE A. LYDON BY DEED OF CHARLES J. LYDON DATED OCTOBER 14, 1977 AND RECORDED WITH SAID REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN BOOK 1985, PAGE 68.

SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS, RESERVATIONS, EASEMENTS, COVENANTS, OIL, GAS OR MINERAL RIGHTS OF RECORD, IF ANY.

BEING THE SAME PREMISES CONVEYED TO CHARLES J. LYDON AND ELAINE A. LYDON, HUSBAND AND WIFE, AS TENANTS BY THE ENTIRETY FROM CHARLES J. LYDON AND ELAINE A. LYDON BY DEED DATED 3/31/1997, AND RECORDED ON 4/4/1997, AT BOOK 5089, PAGE 275, IN HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MA.

Said premises will be sold subject to and/or with the benefit of any and all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, improvements, covenants, outstanding tax title, municipal or other public taxes, assessments, liens or claims in the nature of liens, rights of parties in possession, and existing encumbrances of record created prior to the mortgage, if any there be, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the Deed.

No representations, express or implied, are made with respect to any matter concerning the premises which will be sold "as is".

The successful high bidder will be responsible for paying the Massachusetts State Documentary Tax Stamps, all closing costs and all recording fees.

**TERMS OF SALE:** The highest bidder in the sale shall be required to deposit cash, bank treasurer's check or certified check in the amount of TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$10,000.00) at the time and the place of the sale of the premises to qualify as a bidder (the present holder of the mortgage is exempt from this requirement) to be held by the Mortgagee. The successful bidder will also be required to deposit an additional sum equal to ten percent (10%) of the amount bid less the \$10,000.00 deposit (but no less than \$10,000) with the Mortgagee's auctioneer, Aaron Posnik & Co., Inc., 31 Capital Drive, West Springfield, Massachusetts 01089 or the Mortgagee's attorney as may

be directed within five (5) days of the date of the sale to be held by the Mortgagee, and the balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, certified or bank treasurer's check at the closing which shall occur within thirty (30) days after the date of foreclosure sale, time being of the essence, unless the Mortgagee agrees otherwise. The successful bidder at the sale will also be required to pay a buyer's premium of 5% and shall be required to sign a Memorandum of Terms of Sale containing the above terms at the auction sale.

In the event that the successful bidder at the public auction shall default in purchasing the within described property according to the terms of this Notice of Mortgagee's Sale and/or the terms of the Memorandum of Sale executed at the public auction, the Mortgagee reserves the right, at its election, to sell the property to the second highest bidder at the public auction provided that Mortgagee, in its discretion, may require (1) said second highest bidder to deposit the amount of the required deposit as set forth herein within three (3) business days after written notice to the second highest bidder of the default of the previous highest bidder, (2) the second highest bidder to execute a Memorandum of Sale, and (3) the closing to occur within twenty (20) days of said written notice, time being of the essence unless the Mortgagee agrees otherwise. The Mortgagee reserves the right to sell any parcel or any portion thereof separately, or in any order that Mortgagee may choose and/or to postpone this sale to a later time or date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the sale and to further postpone any adjourned sale date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the adjourned sale date.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the time and place of the sale.

The description for the premises contained in said mortgage shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication.

UMass Five College Federal Credit Union  
Present Holder of said Mortgage  
By

David A. Lavenburg,  
Its Attorney  
BACON WILSON, P.C.  
33 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413) 781-0560

02/19, 02/26, 03/05/2026

**SEARCH** from page 11

the original five members to new terms ending June 30. Sexton read the roster into the record.

Appointed members include David Grosser, Brian Hochschild, Kathleen Bronner, [Prada] Kroner, Jennifer Bartosz — to the town administrator search committee.

O'Grady told the board that all five members of the previous search committee remained eager to serve, and that interest in the administrator job itself is high.

"We have 16 applicants. They're going to have [to] screen out, and they're starting with 16 and see where they go from there," O'Grady said.

Selectboard member David Labonte suggested using the prior committee members as a base and filling two additional seats from a new list of volunteers.

Board member Glenn Sexton said he wanted to broaden participation by including residents who are not already serving on town bodies.

As board members reviewed applications, Labonte highlighted the qualifications of Rosemarie Rosen, one of the new candidates.

"So, I would choose Rosemary [Rosen] ... and what I like [is] her experience with the state and local government, managerial concentrated in finance and HR," Glesmann said [0:05:53]. "That's a lot of experience to when you're trying to go through applicants. She probably would tend to ask a lot of the right questions, being HR."

He also voiced support for Kathy Leonard, saying he preferred her over another candidate who already

serves on multiple boards.

Bail signaled his agreement that Rosen should be added to the committee.

Bail noted his personal support for applicant Dakota Richards who ultimately was not chosen.

After discussion, Labonte made the motion to bring Leonard onto the committee.

Earlier, Bail had moved to appoint Rosen to the committee.

The search committee's formation follows the departure of former Town Administrator Tammy Martin in December 2025. Since then, O'Grady has been acting Town Administrator.

West Street School building bid awarded

O'Grady asked the board to name him as contract signatory so the town can execute the agreement within the bid's 90-day window.

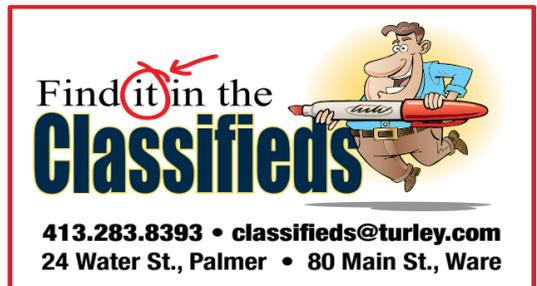
"Between the OPM and the architect, they're working with Marois Construction. The first draft I saw was sent over today, so we just need to appoint a signatory so that we can make sure we get that done before the 90 days is up on that bid," O'Grady said.

Before designating a signatory, the board first moved to award the contract itself.

Board members asked that the contract amount be placed on the record. O'Grady said the figure is just under \$6.8 million.

With the bid awarded, Sexton moved to authorize O'Grady to sign on the town's behalf.

O'Grady noted that the town's owner's project manager and architect would both review the contract language, and that building committee member Brian Hochschild had already examined the original bid package.



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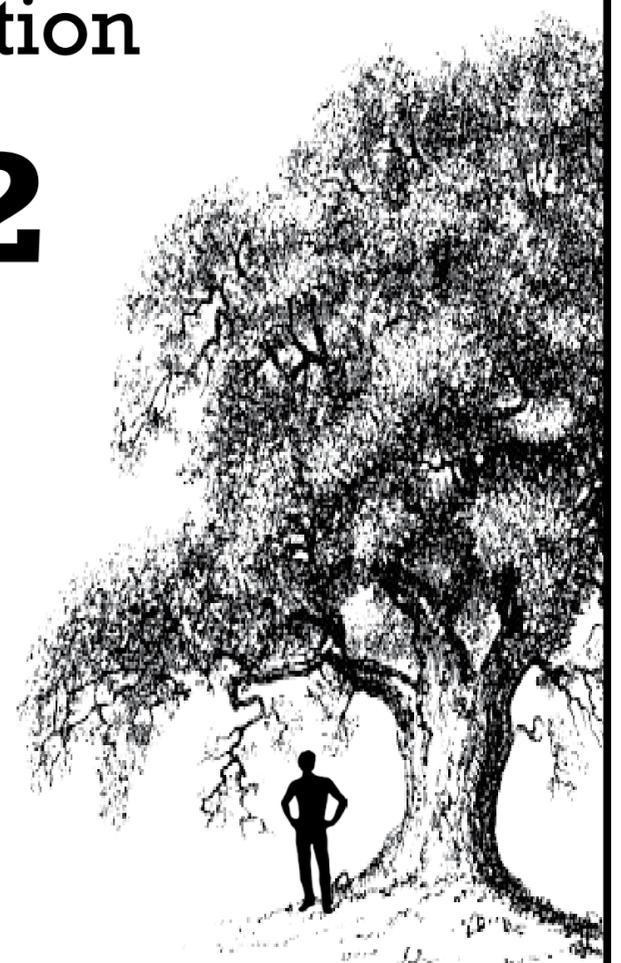
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