

BPD to regionalize dispatch with Wilbraham

Town hopes to save millions

BY MELINA BOURDEAU
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – On July 1, the town will be regionalizing its dispatch center to save money, have more coverage and reduce the hiring challenges the department currently faces.

Belchertown Police Chief Kevin Pacunas and Fire Chief John Ingram spoke to the Selectboard last week about the matter with unanimous support from the Selectboard.

Pacunas told the board that the state is pushing towns to regionalize, and surrounding communities have already done so.

According to a memo sent from Pacunas, maintaining full staff is a challenge, despite the fact the department is currently fully

staffed.

“In order to maintain effective dispatching services, we would need a minimum of eight to nine full-time dispatchers, an increase from our current staffing of five,” Pacunas wrote. “It is a law and essential to have two dispatchers per shift.”

Pacunas added that there are radio infrastructure repairs needed, to the tune of about \$7.6 million.

Through regionalization,

repairs would be funded through state grants, as would security cameras.

There would also be a reduction in an annual training for police officers. The town would also see savings in the salaries and benefits costs.

However, Pacunas said there are drawbacks to the switch – a major one being that the town could not have its own dispatch center again once regionalized.

The town would “lose its per-

sonal touch with citizens, (and) jobs are eliminated,” he said.

Current dispatchers in the department would be eligible to apply for the three positions that would be created in Wilbraham.

Pacunas told the board he spoke with each of the dispatchers. One moved to a county department, one is set to retire in July, one would like to go to Wilbraham, one is unsure and the last person

Please see **DISPATCH**, page 10



FILE PHOTO

Aquatic biologists from the Department of Conservation and Recreation provided tips on how to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species.

Biologists speak on invasive species

BY NICK BOONSTRA
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – Aquatic biologists from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation gave a virtual presentation on March 10, educating the community on the dangers of aquatic invasive species in the Quabbin Reservoir and Ware River Watershed, and providing tips on how to prevent the

introduction and spread of these unwanted plants and animals.

Shasten Sherwell and Tayelor Gosselin shared on how an aquatic invasive species is defined, what species have been identified in the area's bodies of water, and how these plants impact the environment and the community. Fishers, boaters and other recreationists are advised to take care as the winter comes to an end and the warmer season starts ramping up.

Sherwell explained to attendees that an aquatic invasive species is not only one that is not native to the region, but also one that can out-compete native species and cause negative impacts to the environment.

Some of the negative impacts caused by invasive plants include reduction in water quality, disruption of natural food webs, and damage to human-built infra-

Please see **SPECIES**, page 8

Lease renewed at Lampson Brook Farm

BELCHERTOWN – The New England Small Farm Institute has entered into a renewed lease agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for continued stewardship of the 416 acre Lampson Brook Farm (part of the former Belchertown State School).

The new lease, executed with the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, will extend through

Dec. 31, 2025. Under the lease, NESFI will continue its mission of advocacy and support for new and beginning farmers, operating the Lampson Brook Farm site as base for small farm enterprise development and advancing sustainable small farming.

The New England Small Farm Institute is a land-based, non-profit organization located in Belchertown that promotes small farm development by providing

support and training for aspiring, beginning and transitioning farmers.

Founded in 1978 by a local citizens action group – Women in Agriculture – to encourage more sustainable regional agriculture, NESFI became an early pioneer in the organic standards and healthy soils movements, developing cutting edge programming

Please see **LEASE**, page 8

Teen Advisory Board kicks-off March events

BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Staff Writer
epappas@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The teens as part of Clapp Memorial Library's Teen Advisory Board met last week to discuss upcoming events and projects for the month of March.

Composed of teens from grades seven through 12, the TAB discusses various ideas for upcoming projects and events to hold for the community to enjoy.

“I want them to be able to find a deeper sense of community here [at these events],” Ruthie Sterling, the Teen Services Coordinator said. “Our goal is for this to be a place for them to rebuild on the community missed during COVID and develop leadership skills.”

The TAB will be hosting cupcake wars on March 13, where they will judge the cupcakes on their taste and decoration.

I want them to be able to find a deeper sense of community here.”

RUTHIE STERLING,
Teen Services
Coordinator

They will also host two sessions of a Clue-themed escape room at the library on Wednesday, March 20, one at 3 p.m. and the other at 4 p.m.

At the meeting, one member, Arianna, led a lesson on American Sign Language and created handouts and fun games for the other members to enjoy. She did an amazing job explaining the concepts and preparing

Please see **TEENS**, page 7

Planning Board reviews special permit/site plan

BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Staff Writer
epappas@turley.com

AMHERST – The planning board reviewed a request for a special building permit and a site plan to make additions to the Hastings Building on 45 and 55 South Pleasant St.

The March 4 meeting was held over Zoom by Chair Douglas Marshall, and he was joined by Vice Chair Johanna Neumann, Clerk Bruce Coldham, and members Frederic Hartwell, Jesse Mager, Janet McGowan, and Karin Winter.

Site plan review and special permit

Three representatives came forward to discuss the site plan approval for South Pleasant Street LLC.

Tom Reidy joined the meeting to discuss the specifics of developing a mixed-use building off of the Hastings Building on South Pleasant Street and construct a new five-story dwelling unit connected to the back.

John Kuhn provided a brief history of the Hastings Building at 45 and 55 South Pleasant St.

Please see **PLAN**, page 5



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COMMUNITY

History happened here

Volunteers needed at Stone House Museum

BELCHERTOWN – What do you know about your town’s history? Belchertown offers a variety of interesting historical places for its residents and visitors to learn more about its past.

The town common is surrounded by houses and businesses built by our ancestors back when they were driving horse drawn carriages. You can visit the Town Hall, a lovely old library, three town lakes, and of course, the nearby Quabbin Reservoir.

But the jewel among them is the Stone House Museum. Built in 1827, the house portrays family life during the period of 1840-1890. The furniture, textiles, ceramics and carriages all belonged to local residents.

Today the museum has grown to include the original Belchertown Sentinel building, the last remaining one room schoolhouse and a carriage barn designed and funded by Henry Ford. Collections of journals, letters, newspapers, documents and maps are stored in the archives and accessed by people from all over the country researching family and local history.

The museum is a busy place, and it requires a lot of “people support”. The Belchertown Historical Association was established in the early 1900’s to maintain the house and property.

A board of trustees oversees



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Visitors tour the Stone House Museum on opening day last year.

the funds raised to make improvements, repairs and to acquire new artifacts for our collection. Committees supply volunteers to help at fundraising events, give tours, set up displays, tend to the gardens, update our website and Facebook pages and write grants.

The trustees are offering you an opportunity to share your talents with us.

They believe there is something here at the museum for everyone. Whether you excel at financing,

organizing events, working outdoors with plants, or would like to try your hand at giving tours, the trustees welcome you to come and join them.

The board of trustees is looking for new volunteers to help in the effort to share our history and to protect our treasures for future generations.

For more information, email sallyshattuck54@gmail.com, ttstockton@earthlink.net or call 413-230-2022.

Belchertown Community TV Schedule Highlights

- Thursday, March 14**
 - 8 a.m. – Conservation Commission – March 11 meeting
 - 10 a.m. – Planning Board – March 12 meeting
 - Noon – School Committee – March 12 meeting
 - 7 p.m. – BHS Concert – Channel 192
 - 9 p.m. – Planning Board – March 11 meeting
- Friday, March 15**
 - 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 9 a.m. – Agricultural Commission – March 13 meeting
 - 10 a.m. – Board of Health – March 13 meeting
 - 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 7 p.m. – Agricultural Commission – March 13 meeting
 - 8 p.m. – Board of Health – March 13 meeting
- Saturday, March 16**
 - 8 a.m. – BHS Concert Band – March 14
 - 5 p.m. – BHS Concert Band – March 14
 - 7 p.m. – Planning Board – March 12
 - 9 p.m. – School Committee – March 12
- March 12**
 - Sunday, March 17**
 - 4:30 p.m. – St. Francis Roman Catholic Church
 - 6 p.m. – Christ Community Church
 - 7 p.m. – Hope United Methodist Church
 - Monday, March 18**
 - 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 6:30 p.m. – Select Board – Channel 192
 - Tuesday, March 19**
 - 8 a.m. – BHS Concert Band – March 14
 - 7 p.m. – Community Preservation Committee – Channel 192
 - Wednesday, March 20**
 - 8 a.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 9 a.m. – BHS Concert Band – March 14
 - 5 p.m. – Conversation with Pakman
 - 7 p.m. – BHS Concert Band – March 14



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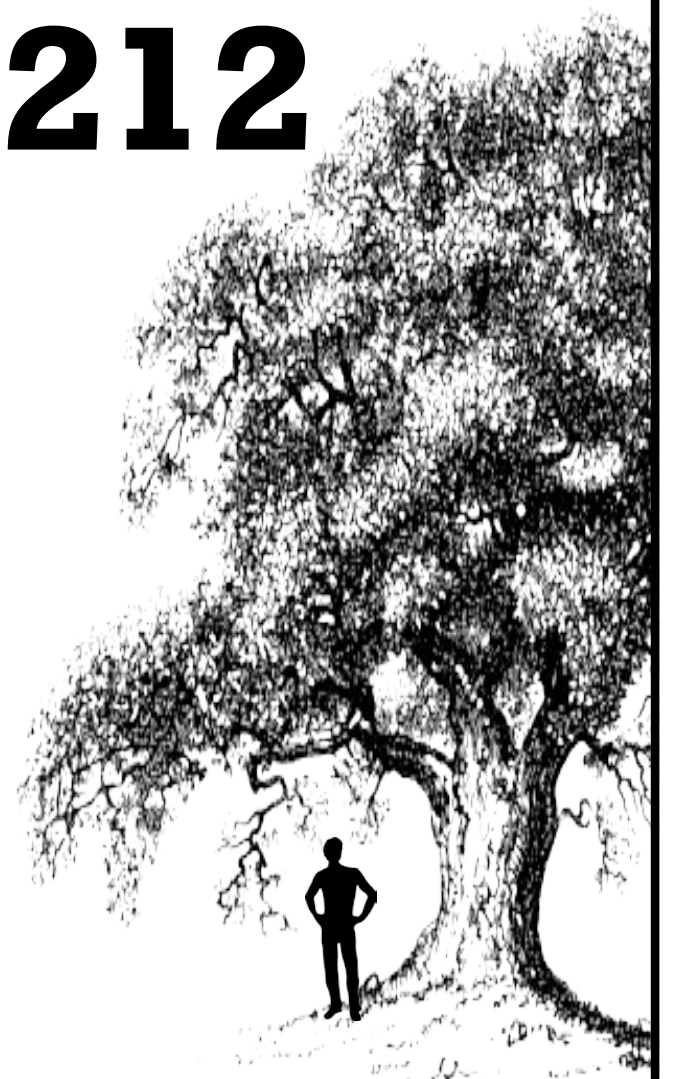
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COMMUNITY

Local businesses pass alcohol purchase survey checks

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together, specifically the Drug-Free Communities Prevention arm, recently conducted alcohol “purchase survey” checks on Feb. 21 between 5-8 p.m. at local businesses that hold liquor/alcohol licenses in Belchertown.

Alcohol purchase surveys are performed by trained mystery shoppers who are of legal age to purchase alcohol, but look young enough that clerks and servers should be checking for identification. The purpose of the survey is to test retailer compliance with state/local law regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages to underage purchasers.

The surveys also identify alcohol establishments that display good business practices that restrict youth access to alcohol. BOAT and Training for Intervention Procedures for serving alcohol recommends to retailers that any purchaser not appearing at minimum 30 years of age be required to produce satisfactory proof of age.

The intent of this recommendation is to eliminate the sale of alcohol to minors.

BOAT is very pleased to report that 12 out of 12 establishments requested identification from the mystery shopper. BOAT sent each establishment a letter of praise, a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thanks to their employee for checking IDs and a positive messaging window cling celebrating each establishments success in asking customers for identification and keeping our youth and community safe.

Additionally, as a follow-up, BOAT will be conducting a TIPS training for employees at all establishments holding alcohol/

UNDERAGE SALES?
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We support a safe and healthy community.

This establishment passed an alcohol purchase survey check on
2/21/2024.



Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together thanks them for preventing youth from purchasing age restricted alcohol products.

SUBMITTED IMAGE
Belchertown businesses received this window cling to celebrate the successful completion of an alcohol purchase survey.

liquor licenses in Belchertown free of charge in the spring.

TIPS is the premier responsible alcohol training program designed to prevent underage drinking, intoxication and drunk driving. The training covers important topics such as alcohol laws and regulations, recognizing signs of intoxication, responsible alcohol service strategies, handling difficult situations, and preventing drunk driving.

The training also emphasizes strategies for managing challeng-

ing situations and promoting a safe environment. Through TIPS certification training, individuals gain the knowledge and skills needed to prevent alcohol-related issues, ensure customer safety, and comply with regulations, ultimately contributing to responsible alcohol service in their establishments.

For more information, please contact Kris Hoag, Program Director, Belchertown Public Schools Drug-Free Communities at khoag@belchertownps.org.

Provide input for new website through online surveys

BELCHERTOWN – The residents, business owners and town employees are all going to have an opportunity to provide input into the new town website that is going to be launching this summer.

A series of online surveys are available on the current website (www.belchertown.org/committees/communications_committee) asking each group what they would like to see on the new website, how they get their information now, and much more.

“We see this as a great opportunity to engage with Belchertown people, businesses and town employees, and we ask that as many people as possible fill them out,” said Town Administrator Steve Williams. “And to help attract more businesses to town, we are asking that group about not only what information they would like to see, we are also asking what they wish they might have



Residents, business owners and town employees can contribute to the new town website by scanning this QR code and completing a series of online surveys.

known before opening their doors. This will help us provide even more resources that can promote a friendly business environment in town.”

The surveys will close on Friday, March 29 and all three are available on the Communications Committee page, and you can access them by scanning the QR code.

‘The Old Bag Sale’ is back

To benefit the Stone House Museum

BELCHERTOWN – The Stone House Museum’s opening day is Saturday, May 11, and “The Old Bag Sale” will be there.

The museum needs your help to make this event a big success. They are collecting gently used bags, pocketbooks, wallets, computer bags, backpacks, etc. (please no suitcases).

Now is the time to clean out your closets and donate – and tell your friends and family to donate as well.

Donation bins have been

placed in several locations around town including Easthampton Savings Bank, the Senior Center, Clapp Memorial Library, Town Hall lobby, Ransaka Gift Shop, Swift River Gift Shop, Making Waves Salon, Looks To Kill Salon, Station Five Salon, Tina Marie’s Hair and Boutique, Dynamic Do’s Salon and Bell and Hudson Insurance Agency. Donation bins have also been placed in Granby at the Free Public Library and at the Senior Center.

Bags will be collected through March and April, and the last day to donate will be May 1.



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The 2023 Belchertown Water District Consumer Confidence Report is available by mail by calling (413) 323-6987.

It is available online on the District website www.belchertownwaterdistrict.org under “Reports”
Direct URL:
<https://www.belchertownwaterdistrict.org/Forms/ccrreport2023.bwd.pdf>

This water quality report is also available at the Belchertown Selectman’s office, the Belchertown Public Library, as well as Belchertown Water District office located at 206 Jabish Street.



ANNUAL CEMETERY CLEANING NOTIFICATION

The Department of Public Works, Maintenance Division will be conducting the annual removal of ALL seasonal decorations within the Towns’ Cemeteries.

For anyone wishing to retrieve personal graveside items, please do so before March 20, 2024.

All items will be removed beginning March 20, 2024.

COMMUNITY

St. Francis of Assisi Parish lists Holy Week schedule

BELCHERTOWN – Holy Week will be observed at St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

The schedule is as follows: Palm Sunday, March 23 and 24: The Mass celebration of the triumphal entry of Jesus into the Holy City will take place on Saturday, at the 4 p.m. Vigil and on Sunday at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Holy Thursday, March 28: As we begin the Sacred Triduum, the parish will commemorate Jesus' betrayal by Judas with the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 p.m., followed by Adoration in the "Garden of Gethsemane" until 10 p.m.

Good Friday, March 29: At 7 p.m., the Sacred Triduum continues with the commemoration of Jesus' passion and death, including the

Veneration of the Cross.

Additionally, the following devotions will be offered during the day on Good Friday: at 11 a.m. a Children's Stations of the Cross will be offered for children in grades K-six and their families. During the hours of noon-3 p.m. all are encouraged to spend silent time in prayer and at 3 p.m., the Stations of the Cross will be prayed.

Holy Saturday, March 30: A Morning Prayer Service, open to all, will be held at 8 a.m. This service supports an individual preparing to be received into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil.

Easter Vigil, March 30: The Sacred Triduum concludes with the Easter Vigil which will take place at

8 p.m., beginning with the lighting of the Easter fire outside the church, followed by the Procession of Light into the church. This is the Church's greatest liturgy, which invites us to truly enter into the great mystery of our faith regarding the death and resurrection of the Lord.

Easter Sunday, March 31: Mass will be celebrated at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7: A Divine Mercy Prayer Service will be held at 3 p.m. in the church. This service celebrates the outpouring of Christ's forgiveness and mercy and includes scripture readings, adoration, recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and benediction.

Holy Week events and Easter worship service at Christ Church

BELCHERTOWN – The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, March 23, from 10-11:30 a.m.

This is a free and fun family event happening at Christ Community Church, 1255 Federal St. Children 10 years and younger are invited to join in the fun.

Registration begins at 9:45 a.m. There will be several egg hunts based on age groups (egg hunt is for ages 3-10, but kids of all ages are welcome to join in on any of the other activities).

In addition to the egg hunt, the church will also have face painting, a photo booth, craft projects, and a fun play section for our toddler friends.

Complimentary Easter egg bags will be provided at registration (while supplies last) for this wonderful free family event.

Holy Week schedule

Good Friday Communion Service:

March 29, 7 p.m. Join Christ Community Church for a time of reflection as we remember the events of Good Friday. Church members will spend time contemplating the final events in the life of Jesus through scripture and music and the end the evening by partaking of the communion meal together.

Childcare will be available for birth through 5 years.

Easter Contemporary Worship Service: Sunday, March 31, 10 a.m. Join church members for a message of hope as they celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. They will spend time in worship through contemporary music and hear a message of hope and love preached by Pastor Emmanuel Haqq.

Children's ministries are available for birth through third grade.

For more information, visit www.gracefortheway.org or call 413-253-0292.

Hope UMC lists Holy Week schedule

BELCHERTOWN – Holy Week will be observed at Hope United Methodist Church, 31 Main St.

The schedule includes worship on Palm Sunday, March 24 at 10 a.m.; Maundy Thursday, March 28 with Passover Seder at 6 p.m.; Good Friday, March 29 with bell ringing at 3 p.m. and Stations of the Cross Service at 7 p.m.; Easter Sunday, March 31 with a sunrise service at 6:15 a.m. at Quabbin Tower (ecumenical service) and Easter Celebration at 10 a.m., Hope UMC sanctuary.



PLAN from page 1

"This is a valuable piece of real estate and asked me to come in to discuss what we can do with it," Kuhn said.

"I was struck by two things: one that it would be very expensive...to convert it into apartments according to today's codes, and two that the parcel is large, and very under-utilized," Kuhn continued.

Kuhn presented that their main goal and problem was figuring out how to connect the existing building to a five-story building.

Jonathan Salvon came on to explain the build, and how the changes will be done in detail, as well as how the building will be used.

"The front portion remains mercantile, the rear portion is amenity and support space for the residential spaces on all the floors above this in both the old building and the new building," Salvon said, as he went over the site plan.

The idea of the housing is that undergraduate students, professors, or families can live in the apartments as it is in close proximity to UMass Amherst.

"There will be four one-bedroom units, four two-bedroom units, five three-bedroom units, and nine four-bedroom units. In total, there will be 22 units and 63 beds," Reidy said.

The board also discussed the possibility of creating a rooftop garden for the residents to enjoy.

Public comments

Pam Rooney of Cottage Street asked about the operation of the book store and wanted to comment on the seating outside of the building.

"I think it will add to the activities on South Pleasant Street," Rooney said. Her only concern was maintaining a fair amount of walking space around the seating area.

Laetitia La Follette of Dana Street came back to give her comment to the board and said, "I strongly support the project...it will create 22 new units for housing, and that that space will be used. Amherst needs both the housing and that commercial space."

Kent Faerber of Station Road said the project will aid in the town's financial problems. He also related his approval for the aid given to the Affordable Housing Commission.

Drainage

The South Pleasant Street LLC's engineer, Phillip Henry, went over the Site Plan with the board regarding the actual build and construction work.

Coldham went over the walk-through of the property and remarked that it would be good to see what is done with the space, and how the construction will work.

Reidy briefly went over the demolition plan and what it would entail, as well as how to stay in accordance with property balances.

Henry explained the drainage and sewage and how to deal with the run-off of rain from the building and parking lot.

"The Hastings Building...has drainage that discharges in a northerly direction," Henry explained. "Essentially, the old building is heading north, and the old building is heading south."

The board moved on to discuss the specifics of the site plan, and how to move forward. The Planning Board will keep updating as decisions are made in the project moving forward.

HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL CHOICE OPENINGS 2024-2025

Hadley Public Schools – serving grades PK-12 is currently accepting School Choice Applications.

Applications can be found on our website at www.hadleyschools.org or call (413) 586-0822.

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OPINION



Will my benefit increase if I work while collecting disability?

Dear Rusty:

I will be 64 in March and currently receive Social Security Disability Insurance payments. My full retirement age is 67, but I'm thinking about trying to return to work.

If I work and my earnings exceed the monthly disability payment limits, but do not exceed the annual limit, how will my disability payments be affected? Will working while receiving Social Security disability payments change my Social Security benefit amount when I reach my full retirement age of 67?

Signed: Mending

Dear Mending:

Social Security doesn't go by annual earnings when it comes to disability; they go by monthly earnings. If your work earnings in any one month of 2024 exceed \$1,550, that will be a flag to SS that you are no longer disabled (\$2,590 per month if you're blind). If that happens for a few months in a row, they will most likely stop your SSDI payments.

Often, this happens retroactively, they won't find out until sometime later that you repeatedly exceeded the monthly limit, but they will likely cancel your SSDI benefits and require you to repay any benefits you received in months you exceeded the monthly SSDI earnings limit or months they deem you were capable of working without restriction.

I suggest you consider enrolling in Social Security's "Ticket to Work" program. While enrolled, you can work and will have a rolling nine month "Trial Work Period" over five years, during which you can earn more than \$1,110/month in 2024 without jeopardizing your SSDI benefits.

If, after completing your nine month trial work period, you are taken off of SSDI (because you're no longer considered disabled), and you again become disabled and unable to work, your SSDI benefits can resume without requiring you to go through the entire application process again. You can test your ability to work, will be able to work some and can earn more than the limit in some months, which makes the Ticket to Work program your best option.

Read more about it here by visiting <https://choose-work.ssa.gov/>.

As for whether working while on SSDI will improve your benefit at your Full Retirement Age, that depends. Your current SSDI benefit is equal to your FRA entitlement from your earnings record at your disability onset date, but paid to you prior to your FRA.

The method for determining your benefit under SSDI is complex and depends on the age at which you became unable to work and the number of Social Security credits you had accumulated at that time. Although SS retirement benefits normally require you earn at least 40 SS quarter credits and are based on your highest earning 35 years, those approved for SSDI can get benefits with fewer than 40 credits and less than 35 years of lifetime earnings.

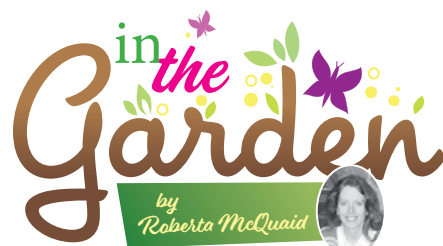
Since each case is unique, I cannot say whether your earnings while on SSDI will improve your FRA amount, but Social Security will monitor your earnings and increase your benefit if appropriate.

FYI, your SSDI benefit would normally automatically convert to become your regular SS retirement benefit at your FRA at the same amount you were receiving while on SSDI.

It's possible that the limited earnings you may have from working while on SSDI may increase your benefit, but that's impossible for me to predict. Your benefit is based on your lifetime earnings history (adjusted for inflation), not on your contributions to Social Security while working.

So, if you are on SSDI and wish to try returning to work, and you think your monthly earnings will occasionally exceed the SSDI limit, I suggest you contact Social Security (1-800-772-1213 or your local office to explore enrolling in the Ticket to Work program. That would be your best option to avoid jeopardizing your SSDI benefits, and your benefit amount will be automatically adjusted by Social Security if appropriate.

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.



News from my garden to yours

I received a text from a friend earlier today asking what is covering my strawberry plants.

I answered her with one word: water.

Yes indeed, a good portion of my garden is drowning at the moment, as are various parts of my yard. We have had too much rain in too short of a period and the ground is still frozen partway down.

It's happened before and will likely happen again, but every time it does, I wonder how these areas could possibly rebound and look good come spring. Usually, they do and with little help from me.

The water recedes and spring comes.

Keep in mind that the soil, be it in your garden or yard, will lose some of its fertility because of leaching, and it will be compacted from such excessive rainfall. Give your plants a side dressing of compost this spring; it will be sure to help restore fertility and improve the condition of the soil in general.

According to a soil test, my garden was notoriously low in nitrogen, so I incorporated blood meal into the soil at planting time with another dose a few weeks later. It didn't occur to me at the time, but flooding a couple of times early in the year could be the culprit of the low nitrogen reading.

Soil that is heavy with water literally pushes out the space that was meant for oxygen and becomes compacted. Without oxygen, plants' vascular systems won't function properly.

As I said before, a few days in the off season likely won't hurt much, but if this were to happen during the growing season, your plants may look wilted even though they are sitting in water.

Root rot, perhaps, or simply that the roots are unable to absorb the water around them.

Lawns should be aerated to remedy this problem, and garden soil should be loosened – once it's dry of course – to get some air into the soil. This can be done numerous ways, by use of various hand tools.

Although scratching around with a three tine cultivator will likely bring some weed seeds to the surface, it is one of my favorite things to do in the garden. I find it a great stress-buster, too.

Do remember to try not to walk on saturated soil or it will compound the problem. Even in the spring when you are working in your garden, place a board under your feet to distribute your weight evenly and prevent more compaction.

Have you noticed that your houseplants have begun to put on an abundance of new growth? Mine sure have! Support this with a dose of half strength liquid fertilizer.

I need to take cuttings of fuchsia and geranium plants that I overwintered. It will sure be great to make cemetery logs with our own geraniums this year.

I will simply cut a terminal (meaning top) stem about 4-5 inches long just after a node (that's where the leaves join the stem). I'll carefully take off all but the top two or three leaves and insert the leafless section into a small pot (say around 2-3 inches in diameter) of good quality moist potting soil.

The two or three leaves you left will be above the soil line. If you have rooting hormone on hand, you can dip the stem into that first, but you don't have to; plants in active growth usually root fine even without it.

I will place my cuttings in indirect light and mist with a spray bottle a couple of times a day to keep them from wilting before they root. Check in about a month, and if you are lucky, roots will have formed.

Depending on the size pot you used, and the size of the roots, it may be a good time to put the plants into a bigger pot and place them in a sunnier window until it's safe to plant them outside.

My daffodil plants are starting to pop up here and there in the yard. I had a little bit of balanced organic granular fertilizer left from last year, so I sprinkled it around the clusters.

Now and once the flowers have gone by are the two best times to fertilize narcissus. I am so excited to enjoy the varied colors and scents from this huge Genus of plants.

To me, they are the epitome of a true spring flower. Soon enough, soon enough!

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

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American Specialty Designs turns moments into memories

BY NICK BOONSTRA
Staff Writer
nboonstra@turley.com

GRANBY – As a girl in the Philippines, Emelie Lyszchyn could hardly have imagined where the course of life would have brought her.

Lyszchyn is the owner of American Specialty Designs on West State Street and is someone who, through her own hard work as well as that of her mother, was able to come to America and build a remarkable life for herself and her family.

American Specialty Designs is a small business that specializes in custom printing and laser engravings for just about everything from T-shirts to wood blocks to water bottles and beyond. Lyszchyn started the business in 2022, and opened the physical location at Five Corners in April of the following year.

Lyszchyn, who clarifies that her last name is pronounced like “physician” but with an “L,” grew up in a poor family in the Philippines, a situation that perhaps helped to bring out her entrepreneurial spirit; by age 10 she was already starting her days selling anything from food to fertilizer to neighbors to make some money. Her mother, meanwhile, supported the family from afar as a domestic worker in Kuwait.

At age 18, the opportunity arose for Lyszchyn to join her mother in Kuwait, an opportunity she took, staying with her mother and her stepfather for a number of years. Her stepfather was an engineer, a profession that came to attract Lyszchyn, alongside her interests in business development and computer programming.

It was while in Kuwait that Lyszchyn first connected with her now-husband Paul, initially through an online game the two of them played. Eventually their relationship reached the point where she decided to take the leap and come to the USA.



Emelie Lyszchyn, owner of American Specialty Designs, stands with some of her custom engraved and printed products.



Home décor has a personal touch at American Specialty Designs. TURLEY PHOTOS BY NICK BOONSTRA

Not for the first time in her life, Lyszchyn felt she was at a point where she had to “start again from the beginning,” she said. So, she started by getting a job at a hardware store and taking classes at Springfield Technical Community College, in multiple subjects

including mechanical engineering and business administration.

Eventually, a big break came, in the form of a management position for a manufacturing company; Lyszchyn was then able to parlay this into sales-minded account management roles in

the waste management industry, bringing her to her current full-time position that she holds in addition to running American Specialty Designs.

All the while, Lyszchyn continued her studies, earning certificates from STCC, and both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

The idea for American Specialty Designs initially came from something meant for Emelie’s husband: the family got an engraving laser to give him something to work on after he started having trouble with his full-time job. However, it ended up not quite clicking for him – “So, I said, might as well,” Emelie shared.

She quickly fell in love with it, and started producing a number of products and designs. This was in early 2022, and soon Lyszchyn started selling what she made out of her home and through the web.

The response she got was over-

whelmingly positive. “People started liking it,” she said, and customers soon started coming with their own requests for designs.

This new aspect of producing designs for others came to mean a lot to Lyszchyn.

“I’m creating something out of their imagination,” she said. “I’m bringing their imagination to life.” Now, “we are not creating ideas anymore, we are turning ordinary moments into extraordinary memories,” she said.

Things only grew from there, and Lyszchyn emphasized her gratitude to the community for all of the assistance in making her dream a reality, including opening a physical location for the business. “The community helped me, uplifted me, to create this small store,” she said.

Lyszchyn hopes to see her endeavors continue to grow, and to give back to the community that has helped her so much. Currently, Marilyn Remillard is the store’s only employee outside of the Lyszchyn family, but Emelie said she hopes to train additional personnel and help create jobs for the area.

“As we grow, the community grows with us,” she said.

Ultimately, in the same way that Lyszchyn’s mother provided for her, she hopes that her work will make an impact on her own child’s life. “I want to create a legacy for my son,” she said. “Just like what my mom did for me, just like what my grandmother did to my mom – each generation paves for the next.”

Information about American Specialty Designs can be found under their Facebook page of the same name, or on their website at <https://americanspecialtydesigns.com>. Their store at 77 West State St. in Granby is open noon-6:30pm Tuesdays through Fridays, and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays.

TEENS from page 1

packets for the other teens to bring home.

One thing that the group is doing is putting together a clothing drive to go to Cradles to Crayons, a nonprofit organization that works to end clothing insecurity for children.

Between the dates of March 25 to April 2, the library will have a tote to collect clothing donations from smoke-free households (with no holes or stains, please) from sizes newborn to adult medium.

TAB meets monthly and always welcomes new members. To register, email claplibrarytab@gmail.com.

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| USDA INSP. SMOKED PORK PICNIC... \$1.99 lb | USDA INSP. FROZEN CORNED BEEF POINT CUT \$1.99 lb | Lenten Specials |
| SLICED IN OUR DELI TURKEY BREAST... \$3.99 lb | USDA INSP. FROZEN FLAT CUT \$2.99 lb | USDA INSP. FROZEN TALAPIA FILLETS... \$4.99 lb |
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| USDA INSP. FROZEN BEEF OXTAILS... \$9.99 lb | USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF 7 LB BAG \$3.66 lb | USDA INSP. FROZEN PAN FRIED BREADED SHRIMP... \$2.99 lb |
| USDA INSP. FROZEN GOAT MEAT... \$6.99 lb | | |
| USDA INSP. FROZEN BEEF TRIPE... \$2.99 lb | | |

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GRANBY

Selectboard appoints new member to Council on Aging

BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS Staff Writer epappas@turley.com

GRANBY – The Selectboard met to discuss various matters regarding the town, old and new projects, positions and committees.

The March 4 meeting was run by Chair Glen N. Sexton, and he was joined by Clerk Crystal Dufresne, Member Richard Beaulieu, and Town Administrator Christopher Martin.

Appointment

The Selectboard approved the appointment of Natalie Archambault to the Council on Aging in order to introduce new programs and offer supplements in order to support the members of the senior center.

Archambault discussed programs like special gym memberships, classes on how to use technologies like Alexa and smartphones, and the inclusion of fun and interesting events.

Old and other businesses

The board also reviewed an applicant

for the position of Town Accountant, and organized a time to meet with and interview them.

One Stop for Growth is still being discussed and reviewed by the committee, and how it can benefit the community. There has also been a volunteer to join the Open Space Committee, and his request was approved.

The Council on Aging's Cookout in the Spring has been planned, and the date will be announced. "The liaison for the Council on Aging will be away for 19 days," Dufresne said. "She just wanted to let everyone know she would not be available."

The West Street Building Committee put work on the Green Communities on hold for now, but updates on both projects will be announced shortly.

New business and information

The board then went over various departmental reports and moved to approve of them and moved forward.

The board then reviewed and signed various Maintenance, Common Victualer, and Entertainment Licenses for the town, and discussed them.

EDUCATION

K of C offers scholarships for graduating seniors

BELCHERTOWN – The St. Francis of Assisi Knights of Columbus Council 10698 of Belchertown is again offering a scholarship to deserving high school graduating senior(s) who plan to continue their education at a college, university, trade school or other accredited post-high school institutions of higher learning, and as striven and demonstrated traits of the same principles of our order or charity and service to their school, faith, and community.

The scholarship is being offered to applicants who are:

A graduating high school senior with a grade point average of 2.5 or higher (and either a Belchertown resident, or family member of a member of the St. Francis of Assisi Council #10698, or parishioner of a Catholic parish in the council's general vicinity of Belchertown, Granby, and

parts of Palmer and Ware) and

To use the awarded scholarship for payment of tuition to an institution of higher learning.

The application submittal deadline is postmarked no later than April 20. No email submissions will be accepted.

Applications are available in area High School Guidance Offices, St. Francis Parish Church vestibule, or online at the Belchertown Knights website page at https://www.stfrancisbelchertown.com/knights-of-columbus. Notification of scholarship recipients will be in early June, either by following their high school scholarship awards presentation traditions or my email.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Council's Scholarship Committee at kofcbelchertown@gmail.com.

Joshua Tan named to Dean's List at UMass

BELCHERTOWN – University of Massachusetts student Joshua Tan was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2023 semester.

Tan is majoring in Civil and

Environmental Engineering and is a member of the Class of 2024.

The University of Massachusetts students with a term GPA of 3.50 or higher were recognized for this academic achievement.

LEASE from page 1

for new and beginning farmers such as the "Exploring the Small Farm Dream" curriculum.

Under NESFI stewardship, the Lampson Brook Farm currently hosts over 20 working small farm enterprises operated by local farm partners under sub-lease. The site is also the home of the Belchertown Community Garden and the Belchertown 4-H Giving Garden.

With numerous historic structures, a picturesque farm landscape and stunning views of the Holyoke Range, Lampson Brook Farm also serves as a valuable recreational and cultural resource for the town and surrounding communities. The extensive network of trails across agricultural and forested acres on the site is enjoyed widely by hikers, cyclists, the High School Cross country team, a local Snowmobile association and many others from the community.

During the growing season, NESFI farmers offer fresh produce at the Jackson Street farmstand.

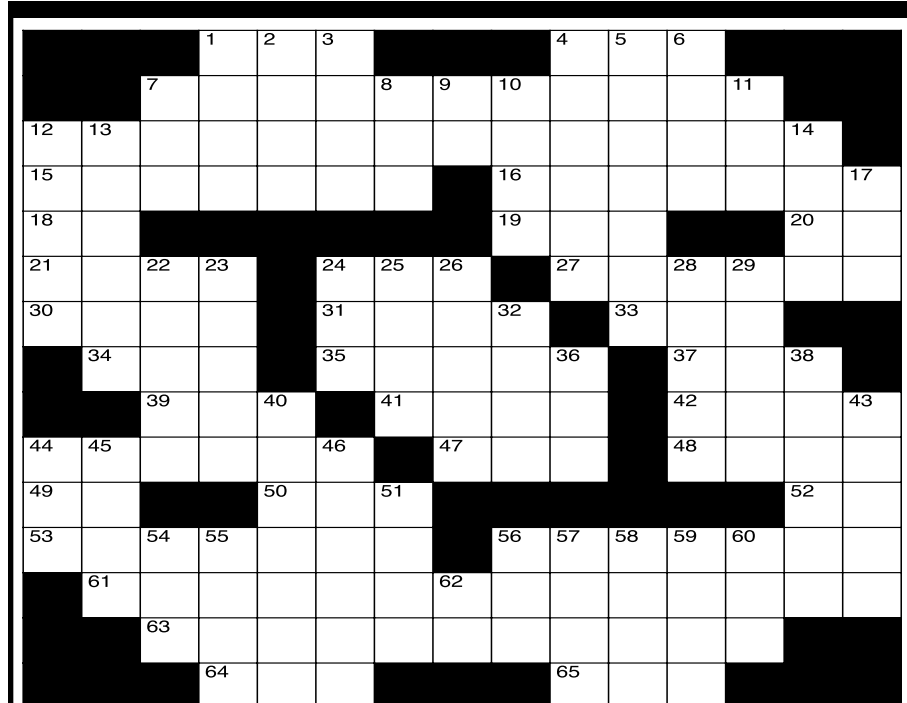
For the 2024 season, NESFI will continue with its educational series hosting workshops on: mushroom cultivation, integrated pest management, flower growing, small engine repair, saw-mill operation, value-added enterprises and other topics.

For more information about NESFI, ongoing programming, educational activities and upcoming events, please visit www.smallfarm.org.

2024-25 Kindergarten registration for open

BELCHERTOWN – If you are a resident of Belchertown with a child who will be 5 years of age on or before Sept. 1, you are encouraged to complete a kindergarten registration packet for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year.

Please contact Christina Aponte by emailing caponte@belchertownps.org or by calling 413-323-0423 extension 100 for additional information.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Helps little firms
4. Political action committee
7. Allowed
12. Olivia Colman played one
15. Open
16. He had a notable lamp
18. Promotional material
19. Domesticated animal
20. Larry and Curly's buddy
21. The best ever
24. TV network
27. Checked for
30. Dry or withered
31. Expression of annoyance
33. Dash
34. Fifth note of a major scale
35. A secret clique
37. Partner to

- cheese
39. ___ school: where to learn healing
41. City in ancient Syria
42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
44. Established practice
47. Thanksgiving side dish
48. District in Peru
49. It's becoming more prevalent
50. State in India
52. Measure of illumination
53. Raised platform
56. Japanese warrior
61. R.L. Stevenson novel
63. Transitory
64. Advanced degree
65. Fiddler crabs

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Prevent from

- seeing
2. Czech city
3. ___ and Andy, TV show
4. A young pig
5. Removed surgically
6. Covered with
7. Chest muscle (slang)
8. Nigerian City
9. Midway between south and east
10. A way to shut
11. Stop playing
12. Marshy places
13. Takes apart
14. Ten cents
17. A gesture of assent
22. Scent
23. Teletypewriter
24. General's assistant (abbr.)
25. Hillside
26. Taxi driver
28. Semitic Sun god

- 29. Town in India
32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
36. Fugitives are on the ___
38. Type of dance
40. Two letters, one sound
43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
44. Golf score
45. Mayhem
46. Drenched
51. River in northeastern Asia
54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
55. Part-time employee
56. A very large body of water
57. Aboriginal people of Japan
58. Millisecond
59. Forearm bone
60. Subway dweller
62. Royal Mail

SPECIES from page 1

structure. Sherwell also mentioned that the values of waterfront properties have been found to fall in areas affected by aquatic invasive species.

Invasive species that have been identified locally include milfoil, phragmites, purple loosestrife and fanwort. Two types of zooplankton, the spiny water flea and the fishhook water flea, as well as hydrilla have also been found around New England but have not been detected in local reservoirs or watersheds as of yet.

Sherwell said that human activity can contribute to the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. Unknowingly, people can transmit invasive species through dumping ballast water and live bait, or by allowing stragglers "hitchhikers" to remain on their boat or equipment.

Gosselin highlighted DCR's techniques for managing and preventing the growth of aquatic invasive species. She highlighted widespread education about these plants as critical to these efforts.

She explained that there was constant monitoring of local bodies of water to ensure any spread of invasive species is detected early. This included 14 annual surveys of the Quabbin Reservoir and the

use of GPS to track both native and invasive species.

If a suspected invasive species is found, Gosselin said that the response was in-depth. "We do have a lengthy process to make sure we're being thorough," she said, adding that each species was handled differently from others.

Harvesting areas of invasive species could be as simple as having DCR contractors pulling growths by hand, Gosselin said, but could involve the more aggressive use of suction hoses if conditions were appropriate.

The biologists closed by asking visitors to DCR sites to ensure that they are inspecting and cleaning their boats and equipment, draining any standing water away from waterways and, if possible, allowing everything to completely dry out for at least five days between visits. They also reminded boaters to only utilize designated boat launch areas, and to pay attention to all signage at these locations.

General information about the Quabbin Reservoir can be found online at https://www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir. Information about the Ware River Watershed is available at https://www.mass.gov/locations/ware-river-watershed.

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SESSION 7: AUG 5-9

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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 Feb. 28 through March 5. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day. Of the 382 calls police responded to, there were 15 incidents, six accidents, two arrests/summons and 30 citations.

**ARRESTS/SUMMONS
Wednesday, Feb. 28**

7:31 p.m. – Collette Pincince, 36, of 40 Main St., Belchertown arrested for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, larceny of a motor vehicle and possession of class B drugs. Got a report vehicle stolen person traveling toward Indian orchard. Unable to locate vehicle after check in the area. Then reporting party got information person was in town. Other officers went to the location they located the vehicle where someone reported it was. Person was identified small bag located with white substance party was arrested owner was contacted. Charged accordingly.

**ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS
Wednesday, Feb. 28**

2:29 p.m. – An officer spoke with a resident about issues involving a neighbor who struck their mailbox. The person was referred to their homeowner insurance to replace the mailbox.

Thursday, Feb. 29

2 a.m. – An officer responded to a report of a tree that fell on a residence. The tree fell onto a residence in Hemlock Hollow during a significant weather event. Powerlines and trees throughout the town were downed. The tree fell across the residents' driveway, and it laid across the roof of the home. The residents reported hearing a loud crash while they were asleep. There was damage to the ceiling, broken roof rafters and the ceiling was on the floor. There were several branches that fell onto a vehicle in the driveway as well. The resident reported an electric smell when they called the police. The town's building inspector and electrical inspector assessed the property and said if the residents didn't use that bedroom the home was safe to occupy.

3:07 a.m. – An officer responded to Ware Road for a report of an accident. A vehicle traveling east on Ware Road went onto the shoulder with their passenger side tires on the shoulder. The operator oversteered to the roadway. The vehicle went into the westbound lane, then came to a stop in a ditch. The vehicle became stuck in deep mud. There was damage to the bumper and

rear well of the vehicle. No injuries were reported.

12:59 p.m. – Belchertown Police, Fire and paramedics responded to a report of a person having an allergic reaction.

5:31 p.m. – An officer spoke with a person about a larceny of their mailbox. The person reported it was there the day before. The resident reported it was taken from its location rather than struck. The matter was documented.

Friday, March 1

9:32 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on North Liberty Street. A vehicle traveling north on North Liberty Street when it hit a mailbox. The operator lost control of the vehicle, causing it to strike a rock wall, a tree, and another mailbox.

7:48 p.m. – An officer spoke with a resident about suspicious mail they received. Credit cards from a bank with other people's names on them. A correspondence from a loan company was also included. The resident was told to run a check on their accounts.

11:08 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Maple Street. A vehicle traveling west on Maple Street experienced an equipment failure. The vehicle's right wheel was stuck pulling left. The vehicle crossed the lane and struck the side of a second vehicle. The vehicle then went further left and came to rest on a lawn, causing property damage. One person was transported to the hospital. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

Saturday, March 2

9:09 p.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire and paramedics with a person having a cardiac event.

11:36 p.m. – An officer dispatched for a report of someone who shot a firearm outside of a residence. There was a vehicle across the street the caller said appeared to be a pick-up truck. The officer checked the residence for any damage from a firearm. The officer checked the roadway and there were no shell casings. There was a be on the lookout order placed to surrounding departments. The matter is still under investigation.

Sunday, March 3

1:44 p.m. – An officer responded to Jackson Street for a report of illegal dumping in the woods behind a resident's house. There were tires in the woods and a few were imbedded in the ground. There were also tractor tires with dead limbs lying on top of them that were recently placed there. The officer felt the tires were there for a while. The matter was documented.

Monday, March 4

1:25 a.m. – An officer responded to a North Main Street residence for a report of

a disturbance. They heard a person talking the argument and doors slammed it was a verbal argument only.

7:18 a.m. – An officer took a report that at some point in the night a resident's car was moved from the parking space and it was resting against a truck. The resident was missing a set of keys they believed someone was able to get into their vehicle to try to steal it. The vehicle crashed into another vehicle. The vehicle toppled over a scooter that was picked up. There was no other information. The officer got a call later on that the keys were found in the wood line.

10:08 a.m. – An officer dispatched to a residence to perform a wellbeing check.

2:28 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street. A vehicle attempting to pull out onto Federal Street from their driveway struck a bus that was in the left bound stopping traffic. None of the drivers or occupants were harmed. No tows were needed.

2:52 p.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire and paramedics with an intoxicated person.

Tuesday, March 5

5:53 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street. While on Federal Street a second vehicle began to pass the first. While going back over to the correct lane, the second vehicle struck the first. There was damage to the first vehicle on the front left side. No injuries were reported, and no tows were needed.

9:03 a.m. – An officer to George Hannum Road business for a report of shoplifting. There was an elderly person who was attempting to leave without paying for an item. The officer began a search of the area and saw a vehicle traveling right on Federal Street. The officer conducted a stop of the vehicle. Two elderly people in the vehicle were identified. There were no grocery items in the vehicle. Another officer still at the business was told that an employee at the self-check-out left for a moment when an elderly person tried to purchase groceries but walked out of the store without paying for the food. A no trespass order was issued to the person. The business was contemplating pressing charges.

2:32 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on South Washington. A vehicle traveling south on South Washington when a deer ran across the road. south on south Washington when deer ran across the road. The operator swerved to avoid hitting the deer and left the roadway. The vehicle struck two trees on either side before coming to final rest in a swamp. There was heavy body damage and undercarriage damage. The operator refused medical attention.

5:31 p.m. – Belchertown fire and police

responded to a Franklin Street residence for a report of a house fire. The officer arrived first and saw heavy smoke in the yard appeared to be coming from a connecting area between the house and a barn. A person at the property was identified as the homeowner and the other resident came out of the house as well. There was smoke coming from between the home and a barn. Massachusetts State Police responded on scene to assist in blocking Franklin Street. They believed electrical issues occurred in the walls, causing the fire.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 139 calls for the week of March 1 through March 7. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, March 1

1:54 p.m. – A motorist reported that a car struck arborvitae in the parking lot of the post office. There were no injuries.

Sunday, March 3

4:15 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 57 mph in 40 mph zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding.

Monday, March 4

8:22 a.m. – Granby Police responded to a report of two men arguing and a minor motor vehicle accident in the drive thru of Dunkin Donuts. One of the parties left before police arrived. An accident and an incident report were completed.

8:34 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 50 mph in 35 mph zone. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil citation for speeding.

Tuesday, March 5

5:01 p.m. – Multiple callers reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. One operator was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

7:20 p.m. – Granby Police and Fire responded to report of a single vehicle crash. There were no injuries.

Wednesday, March 6

12:32 p.m. – A resident came to the station to report that someone fraudulently opened an unemployment claim in their name. An incident report was completed.

DISPATCH from page 1

is set to go the police academy in May.

There would also be a few part time positions that would become available.

Pacunas said Wilbraham would be a good fit for the town.

Ingram added that after taking a serious look at other agencies and communities, Wilbraham is a good fit.

Town Administrator Steve Williams said he recently took a tour of Wilbraham's dispatch center and was impressed.

"It's a state-of-the-art center, I was impressed not only with the facility but with the people – how professional they were and how eager they were," he said. "The numbers really speak for themselves."

He added that the face-to-face interaction is an important element for the department to maintain, so there will

be some people in the station with office hours so that "if somebody needs to be at the station for some reason, there will still be a face."

Selectboard member Peg Louraine asked the chiefs why Wilbraham was a perfect fit for the town.

Pacunas said the new regional dispatch center would encompass three departments, Wilbraham, Hampden and Belchertown. He added that Hampden gets about 300 calls per year, while Belchertown gets 16,000, so it'll be more like two towns.

Selectboard member Lesa Lessard Pearson asked about what the difference was between a dispatcher and a clerk.

Pacunas said dispatchers must answer 911 calls, the business line and any traffic at the front window of the department. They also have clerical duties.

As far as costs to the town, Williams said the town needs to figure out the salary range for the department for the unemployment costs, which will be going towards the fiscal year 2025 budget.

There will be a "soft start" beginning in June.



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Orioles capture first sectional title

BY TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN—The members of the Belchertown boys swim team will probably remember the 2023-24 season for the rest of their lives.

“We had an amazing season,” said Belchertown boys swim coach Johanna Manduley. “We went undefeated in our regular season meets and we won the league title. We then captured the Central/ West sectional championship title for the first time in school history. We also finished fourth in the Division 2 state championships. Everything aligned the right way for us this season. I’m very proud of my

boys.”

Before being named as the Belchertown boys’ swim coach three years ago, Manduley was a coach for the Belchertown Stingrays.

“I coached a lot of the kids who swam on this year’s team when I was coaching with the Stingrays,” she said. “When Belchertown High School was looking for a boy’s swim coach, one of the parents asked me if I would fill the position. This is the first time that I’ve coached a varsity swim team.”

While the Orioles boys swim team has always had talented swimmers, the overall team depth was the biggest difference this winter.

“In past years, we haven’t had the depth that you need to win a championship title,” Manduley said. “We had eight or nine talented swimmers on this year’s team. Winning the Central/ West sectional championship was their main goal. They put in the hard work and were able to achieve that goal.”

The Orioles won the Minuteman league title with a perfect 11-0 record.

They then captured the Central/ West sectional championship title, which was held at Springfield College, with 275.5 points. Minnechaug Regional finished in second place (239 points) followed by Longmeadow (178),

Northampton (167), and Westfield (159).

“We really wanted to win the Central/ West sectional championship this season,” said Belchertown senior Derek Gould, who was a team captain. “To be able to accomplish our goal was very special. Everyone on the team contributed to our success.”

“It was amazing to win a championship as a senior,” added Caleb Perron. “We just kept improving in every meet.”

The other senior listed on the Orioles boys swim roster is Luke Giguere.

At the Central/ West champi-
Please see **ORIOLES**, page 12



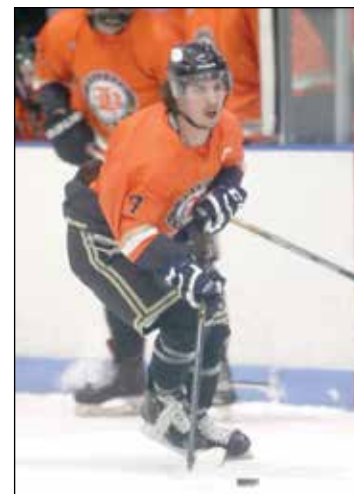
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Mark Laviolette, of Ludlow makes his way up the right side of the ice.

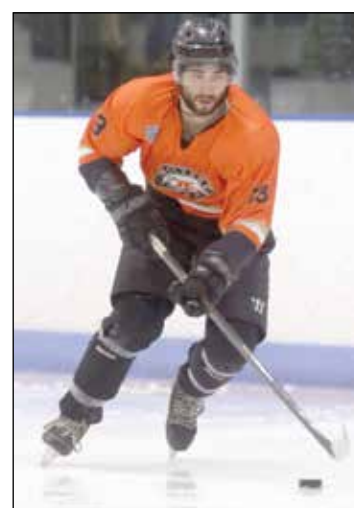
Papermen represent region in new league

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Papermen, an amateur adult hockey team, was in action last Saturday afternoon. The Papermen are brand new adult team participating in the Union Hockey League, a new adult league in the New York and New England region. The new team got started in January and is playing a 32-game season with seven other teams that joined the league. Home games are played at Fitzpatrick Rink in Holyoke.

See more photos on page 13.



Nick McNally comes into the ice and immediately takes control of the puck



Gaetano Delonge receives a pass.

Pioneers lose state tourney opener to Panthers

BY TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—The Palmer Panthers won a preliminary round home game in the Division 5 state boys basketball tournament for the second time in the past three years.

Led by senior Andrew Menard and freshman Taydem Haley, who combined for 48 points, the 23rd-seeded Panthers advanced into the round of 32 with a 79-51 victory over the 42nd-seeded Pathfinder Tech Pioneers on Feb. 27.

“It’s really good for these guys, especially the two seniors, to have a home win in the states,” said Palmer head coach Missy Rocker said. “As soon as we found out that we would be facing Pathfinder, the kids were very excited about playing against their friends.”

Two years ago, Palmer defeated the Hampden Charter School East, 61-40, in a preliminary home game before losing at

Hopkins Academy in the round of 32.

This year’s postseason journey also came to an end for the Panthers in the round of 32 following a 68-49 road loss to the 10th-seeded Douglas Tigers two nights later.

Palmer finished their season with an 11-10 overall record.

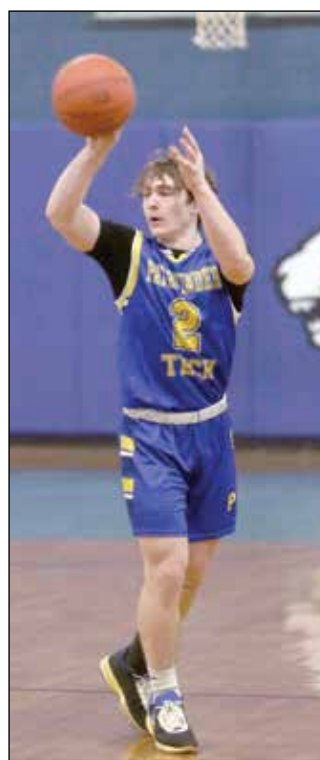
Menard, who scored 13 of his 22 points against the Pioneers during the second half, and Shawn Troche are the two seniors listed on the Panthers varsity roster.

“Andrew and I have been playing on the same basketball teams since we were little kids,” said Troche, who chipped in with seven points. “It feels amazing to win a state tournament game in our final home game. We lost in the round of 32 two years ago and we’re hoping to get to the round of 16 this year.”

Haley, who’s a tri-captain captain with the two seniors, played in his first state tournament game against Pathfinder Tech. He net-



Adam Slonka ranges for a layup from the right side.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Hunter Griswold passes on the run.

ted 18 of his career-high 26 points after halftime.

“Winning a game in the state tournament feels really good,”

Haley said. “There was a lot of pressure on us, but we worked

Please see **PIONEERS**, page 13

St. Patrick’s Road Race set for this Saturday afternoon

BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The weekend of St. Patrick’s Day is synonymous with the popular parade in the streets of downtown Holyoke. But equally tradition is the 10K St. Patrick’s Day Road Race.

The road race was disappointingly cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021 when COVID-19 rates rose due to the vaccine not being as widely available at the time.

But last year, the race returned to the joy people throughout the region and beyond and Holyoke once again became a hub of activity beginning with “Race



The first wave of harriers are off in the 2023 St. Patrick’s Road Race in Holyoke.

Day.”

And the sights and scenes of St. Patrick’s Day weekend were also back in the Paper City the

past two years as the downtown area around Maple and High Streets were lined with patrons. Bars and restaurants were filled

Please see **RACE**, page 15

SPORTS

Thunderbirds suffer shutout against Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (26-26-3-2) threw everything they could at the net of the Providence Bruins (35-17-3-2) without success in a 5-0 defeat on Sunday at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

It was evident from the onset that the goaltenders were not going to allow anything easily, as both Colten Ellis of Springfield and Brandon Bussi of Providence came out with laser-like focus. Bussi was exceptional from the get-go, as he turned away a trio of point-blank chances in the opening 10 minutes off of Will Bitten, Joey Duszak, and Zach Dean.

Operating on the first power play of the afternoon, the T-Birds instead saw the scoreless deadlock broken when Jayson Megna intercepted a pass and beat everyone up ice to beat Ellis on a backhand breakaway, giving the P-Bruins a 1-0 lead at 11:23 of the first period.

Megna's tally, which began Providence's Teddy Bear Toss, proved to be the only shot to beat

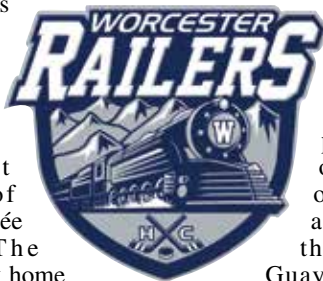
Bussi or Ellis for the next period and a half. The T-Birds peppered the Providence net from all angles and in all situations, but Bussi continued to bamboozle his division foes.

With Springfield still pushing hard to equalize, Oskar Steen finally afforded Bussi and his defense some insurance when he elevated a wrist shot past Ellis 3:58 into the final period. Joey Abate and John Beecher would follow suit, setting each other up for odd-man rush goals at 13:45 and 15:37 respectively. With the game well in hand, the Bruins' top power play unit added one more for good measure as Georgii Merkulov potted the Bruins' 5th goal at 19:28.

The T-Birds get some well-deserved rest before a crucial two-game series in Charlotte next Saturday and Sunday against the Checkers inside Bojangles' Coliseum. Puck drop on Saturday is set for 4 p.m., with a 1 p.m. matinee on tap for Sunday.

Railers suffer loss to Lions

TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC – The Worcester Railers HC (25-25-4-2, 56pts) lost to the Trois-Rivières Lions (23-26-3-3, 52pts) on Saturday afternoon by the final score of 3-1 in front of a crowd of 2,224 at the Colisée Videotron.



The Railers head back home to play the Reading Royals for their second school-day game of the year on Wednesday, March 13th at 10:05am.

Trois-Rivieres notched the game's first two goals from Jakov Novak (1-0-1) and Justin Ducharme (1-0-1) to go up 2-0 entering the second. Nicolas Guay (1-0-1) extended the Lions lead to 3-0 with an early goal in the second. Trevor Cosgrove (1-0-1) scored the final goal of the game in the second on the power play as the Railers would go on to lose 3-1 to Trois-Rivières to wrap up the weekend.

Jakov Novak (21st) continued his hot play against the Railers with his 13th point against the team this year. Novak found the puck loose in front on a chaotic play in front of Ceci and proceeded to pat it past him to Put the Lions ahead 1-0. While short-handed, Cory Thomas airmailed a puck from his own corner into the neutral zone. Justin Ducharme (14th) skated past

the Railers defense and scooped up the puck en route to scoring blocker side on a breakaway past Ceci to make it 2-0 Trois-Rivières going into the second.

Trois-Rivières picked up in the second where they left off in the first with a goal just 3:57 into the frame. Nicolas Guay (6th) entered the Railers zone on a three-on-one rush with Tyler Hylland and John Parker-Jones. As the puck bounced around the attacking zone, Guay placed a perfect shot bar-down past Ceci for his second goal in two games to make it 3-0 Lions. Worcester went to the power play for the second time off a trip from Nicolas Lariviere.

Trevor Cosgrove (7th) hammered a one-timer off a pass from Keeghan Howdeshell and made it 3-1 Railers on the man-advantage. The Lions continued to pressure in the second, but Cole Ceci was strong the rest of the period as Worcester was outshot 13-7 in the second.

Worcester woke up in the third, outshooting the Lions 18-2 in the frame. Worcester tested Strauss Mann heavily in the period, but the Greenwich, CT native was strong in net as he turned all 18 shots aside. He secured the third star of the game for the Lions, along with the win for Trois-Rivieres.

Pitkat gets new ride as he returns to Stafford

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT – Woody Pitkat announced today that he will return to competition in the Open Modified events at Stafford Motor Speedway during the 2024 season. Pitkat will drive the No. 8, a Chassis Pro machine, owned by Mike and Makayla Holmes.

Pitkat will run all of the Open Modified events, including the \$20,000 to win NAPA Spring Sizzler to open the season, April 27-28.

"Mike has been a friend over the years and driving for him in this new car is a great opportunity," Pitkat said. "The team will remain very similar to our team with Dunleavy Racing, with Cam McDermott as the crew chief and many of our crew members. We're looking forward to getting back to Stafford, a place I am lucky enough to call home. They have done a great job with their short-track racing program and we're excited to chase wins in these major events."

The team may also run additional events in New England if time allows. Pitkat announced last week he will return to Dunleavy Racing to compete for the full Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series

schedule driving their No. 88.

Mike Holmes & Son Excavating includes services like septic installation, septic repairs, complete house lots, additions, yard expansions, drainage work, gravel driveways, trucking and more. They also have a 24-hour emergency service available.

"We're beyond excited to finally be a car owner, especially with having a driver like Woody Pitkat behind the wheel," Mike Holmes said. "Woody has become a great friend over the years and I'm blessed to have Cam and his wife, Lauren, who have become family to my wife Makayla and I, along with our entire crew. I can't thank Todd Owen, the Chassis Pro team, and all of our sponsors and crew members enough. We're looking forward to Stafford and some other races we will have scheduled to chase checkered flags and have a fun year."

Pitkat is second on the all-time Stafford Motor Speedway wins list with 83 career victories, the most recent in 2023. He's also a two-time Stafford Late Model champion and a former SK Modified champion at the Connecticut half-mile.

Registration now open for Quabbin Valley baseball

The Quabbin Valley Over-28 Baseball League is looking to infuse new talent into its league for the 2024 season.

Registration for the 2024 season is now open and any interested players can go to www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org to get registered, or to seek more information or make inquiries about the league. The league website will also be updated over the next month with information about the upcoming season.

There are many open roster spots available in the league for the 2024 season, which is tentatively scheduled to begin on Sunday, April 21. The league plays most Sunday from late April through late August with playoffs following that. The league plays a 15-game schedule and typically fields six teams each year. Games are usually played at 10 a.m. with fields in Easthampton and South Hadley normally used.

The Quabbin Valley league is an all-abilities league and all are welcome to join. Eligibility is players who are age 28 and over. You must be 30 to be eligible to pitch in the league. Your age for eligibility is whatever age you will turn in 2024. The league is also able to entertaining taking in an entire group as a team to add to the league. Please email the league board for to inquire about entering a team.

The league is currently in the process of preparing for the 2024 season and held a meeting on Feb. 18 to discussion plans for the upcoming season. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday March 24 at 11:40 a.m. at the Hangar Pub & Grill in South Hadley. All are welcome to attend the meeting, ask questions and express interest in joining.

Pioneers 2024 schedule released

LUDLOW – Earlier this week, the Western Mass. Pioneers have released their 2024 schedule. It includes potential participation in the U.S. Open Cup, which begins on March 19. The Pioneers have won an Open Cup match in the past. Later, the Pioneers have their "friendly" exhibition game scheduled for May

10. They will face 3rd Eye FC prior to the start of their USL-2 League schedule. Their opener for the regular season is against the Boston Bolts on the road May 14. Their home opener is scheduled for May 18 against Pathfinder FC of New York. The schedule continues through July 13 and includes a total of 14 games.

ORIOLES from page 11

onship meet, Giguere, who's a four-year member of the swim team, finished first in the 200 individual medley (1:57.56) and in the 100 backstroke (52.72). He was also a member of the 400-yard freestyle team and the 200 medley relay teams, which also came in first place.

"Winning the Central/ West sectional championship was a great accomplishment for us," Giguere said.

The other members of the Orioles relay team are Derek Gould, sophomore Ryan Shea, and freshman JR Zlogar.

"There is a lot more pressure in the relays than there are in the individual races," Gould said. "If you mess up in an individual event, it's on you, but you don't want to let your team down in a relay. Everyone on the relay teams worked very hard together to accomplish the goal."

Giguere holds the school record in the 100 butterfly (51.11 seconds) which he broke at last year's Central/ West sectional championships.

"It was a cool feeling after I broke the 100 fly record," Giguere said. "I didn't swim in that event very many times last year. My favorite event is the 100 backstroke."

Shea gave his thoughts about the three seniors.

"Our three seniors were amazing this year," he said. "They

really helped us a lot at both the Central/ West championships and at states. Being teammates with them was an honor. We're hoping to defend our sectional title next year."

The Orioles entered the Central/ West championships as the top-seeded team followed by Minnechaug, who captured the sectional title a year ago.

The Falcons are also the Orioles' biggest rivals in the swimming pool.

"Minnechaug has always been a huge competitor of ours," Manduley added. "We defeated them during the regular season. It was one of the closest meets that we had during the regular season. They have a lot of talented swimmers, and they also have a lot of depth."

The final score of the Minnechaug meet, which took place on January 19 at the Chestnut Hill Community School pool was 98-72. The Orioles scored more than 100 points in nine regular season meets. The top six finishers in each event earn points.

Belchertown (127 points) finished in fourth place at the Division 2 state championship meet, which was held at Zesiger Sports and Fitness Center located on the M.I.T. campus in Boston. Weston High School (293) finished in first place followed by Wayland (214), and Medfield (141). Minnechaug (113) came in sixth.

Because the Chestnut Hill Community School pool doesn't have a diving board, the Orioles aren't able to have a diving team.

"Going into the postseason meets, we automatically lost twenty points because we don't have a diving team," Manduley said. "These guys just overcame the odds and became champions this year."

The members of the junior class on the boys' swim team are Trenton Harper, Noah Les, Ben Les, and George Wheeler, who was also a captain.

"It was a privilege being a captain of the swim team this year," said Wheeler, who'll be a senior captain next season. "The seniors made a huge impact on our team, and we have big shoes to fill next year. It was one of the best seasons our swim team has ever had."

Derek Gould's younger brother, Ryan, is a member of the sophomore class, along with Miles McNamara, and Ryan Volz-Benoit.

Rounding out the boy's swim team are freshmen Drake Dragon, Austin Hammon, Emmett Howard, and Ben Smolinski.

The returning members of the Belchertown boys' swim team will be looking to defend their Central/ West sectional championship title and perform well in the Division 2 state championship meet a year from now.



SPORTS

PAPERMEN REPRESENT REGION IN NEW LEAGUE

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
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Zach Paisley heads up the left side of the ice.



Vinnie McAllister sends a pass away.



Nick Cambria looks to center the puck.

PIONEERS from page 11

very hard as a team.” Troche was very impressed with Haley’s outstanding performance. “Taydem is only a freshman, but he scored 26 points, which is amazing,” he said. “He always plays every game with a lot of confidence.” Pathfinder Tech, who has made three appearances in the state tournament since the postseason format was changed in 2021, finished their season with an 11-10 overall record. “Even though the final score was worse than the first time that we played Palmer, I thought it was a much more competitive game tonight,” said Pathfinder head coach Zac Button. “We battled them to the end.” The seven seniors listed on the Pioneers varsity roster are Hunter Griswold, Adrien Moskovitz, Branden Hnitecki, Luke Magnus, Trevor Allard, Adam Slonka, and Richie Gula. “We’ll be losing seven very good kids,” Button said. “I

coached the seniors on the junior varsity team before coaching them at the varsity level the past two years. They work very hard on the court and in the classroom. They’re a very special group.” Gula scored a team-high 17 points in his final high school basketball game. Griswold, whos’ planning on playing football at Mass Maritime Academy next fall, scored 14 of his 16 points during the second half. “I do know most of the Palmer players and losing to them in a state tournament game is tough,” said Griswold, who’s an outstanding three-sport athlete. “It has been awesome being a member of this basketball team for the last four years.” At the end of December, the Panthers made the trip down the street to Pathfinder Tech and celebrated a 53-37 non-league victory. Haley scored a game-high 18 points in that contest. Menard scored the first four points in last Tuesday’s contest and the Panthers never trailed. A couple of minutes later,

a lay-up by sophomore Angel Torres (7 points) gave the home team an 8-4 advantage. Gula made the first of his two trifectas with 5:15 remaining in the opening quarter, which closed the gap to 8-7. Then Haley buried a 3-pointer from the top of the key beginning a 13-3 Palmer run. Haley scored six more points during the final five minutes of the first quarter. “Taydem is an outstanding point guard for a freshman,” Rucker said. “He’s a big catalyst for our team and jump-starts things. His performance tonight was unbelievable. He made fantastic shots while driving, and that’s what we need more of.” Sophomore Dylan Doherty (8 points) added a field goal and made a pair of foul shots for the home team during the run. Sophomore Stephen Fredette (5 points) also made a free throw, as the Panthers entered the second quarter holding a 21-10 advantage. Pathfinder Tech began the second stanza with a pair of inside hoops by Allard (6 points) and

Slonka (8 points) before Palmer scored the next seven points. Late in the first half, a Doherty put-back hoop gave the Panthers a 37-21 lead. Haley took over the spotlight offensively during the third quarter by scoring twelve points, which helped Palmer keep their double digit lead. “Taydem is a heck of a basketball player,” Button said. “He cut right through our defense, especially in the third quarter.” The Pioneers did cut the deficit to ten points a couple of times in the quarter quarter, but they weren’t able to get any closer than that the rest of the way. Griswold made five field goals and a foul shot during the final eight minutes of the contest for the visiting team. The returning Pioneers players will be looking for a little bit of revenge when they play another game at the Palmer High School gymnasium during the 2024-25 regular season.



TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Stephen Fredette takes a free throw.



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The Town of Brookfield is seeking an experienced full-time Highway Superintendent. Full job description at **brookfieldma.us**. Please submit resume and cover letter to **selectmen@brookfieldma.us**. Application review will begin after March 28th. Resumes accepted until position is filled. Brookfield is an equal opportunity employer.

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The Town of Huntington is seeking a part-time **HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** for 16 hours per week. Applicants must be proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook. Hours are flexible, but must be worked during the regular highway department hours of Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to assist the Highway Superintendent. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ALDEN CREDIT UNION ANNUAL MEETING
 Alden Credit Union will hold its annual meeting on **Monday, March 25, 2024** at **Food 101 Bar & Bistro, 19 College Street, South Hadley, MA from 5 p.m to 6 p.m.**
 For further details or to RSVP please contact, Jennifer Faustino at 413-536-0475 ext. 107
 03/07, 03/14/2024

Notice of Planning Board Hearing Relative to Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment/Addition Pursuant to MGL c.40A, §5.
 The Planning Board of the Town of Belchertown will hold a public hearing to discuss proposed amendments to the town's zoning by-laws, both remotely and in person as follows:
Place: Select Board Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall
2 Jabish Street, Belchertown
Date: March 26, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm
 Remote access information: <https://meet.gotocom/173538941>
 You can also dial in using your phone.
 United States: +1 (408) 650-3123
 Access Code: 173-538-941
 The subject matter of the proposed amendment is as indicated below.

To amend the Schedule of Uses for Contractor's Yard; to amend the dimensional regulations for Multiple Dwelling Residential zone; to amend the Accessory Apt. requirements; to add Battery Energy Storage Systems.
 The complete text relative to the proposed amendment are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Town Clerk's office and the Planning Board office and at masspublicnotices.org
 03/07, 03/14/2024

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLE
 This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of March 15, 2024 the fol-

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PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

The Holyoke Grand Colleen and her court hold the finish tape.

RACE from page 11

This year's male and overall winner was Michael Norberg, who also is from Amherst. He finished with a time 30:50. He was more than 30 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher, Bradley Mish, of Hadley.

There were more than 5,000 participants in this year's event, which is part of a big weekend in Holyoke, going along with the parade that took place on Sunday. It also is viewed as a practice course for runners participating in more races later in the year, including the Boston Marathon. There are harriers who will run 6.2-mile course multiple times to simulate 26.2-mile marathon distance, including participating in the main race.

Of the more than 5,000 harriers signed up, 3,813 registered finishes.

Benjamin Lasky, of Ludlow, was a top local finisher, coming in 14th at 33:41. Lasky has been a top 10 finisher in the past.

The race continued traditions of participants running for various charities and other causes, in honor of deceased loved ones, and of course, the running of the race in costume.

The current cost, as of press time, to enter the race, is \$35. The two-mile walk price was \$25 as of press time, but was expected to rise on March 13.

The weather, as of press time, is expected to be warmer than in previous years, near 60 and sunny.



For the second straight year, Jenna Gigliotti, of Amherst, was the top female finisher. She came in at 35:29.



Michael Norberg, of Amherst, finishes first overall in the road race with a time of 30:50.

Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.

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Town announces board, committee vacancies

BELCHERTOWN – The town’s Select Board is seeking citizens to share their expertise by serving on a town board or committee.

Those who have time and are interested in getting involved in the town’s activities are asked to submit a letter of interest to: Select Board, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007, or by email to selectboard@belchertown.org (unless otherwise indicated below).

The town has announced that it wishes to fill the following vacancies:

Cultural Council

One vacancy

The Town wishes to fill an anticipated vacancy on the Cultural Council. The Cultural Council promotes an appreciation of the arts and culture by participating in the development and administration of funds for local cultural activities.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Trail Stewardship Council

One vacancy

The Town wishes to fill a vacancy to represent landowners of the Town on the Trail Stewardship Council. Interested individuals should be knowledgeable about local land use and related issues. Additional information specific to this council can be found at www.newenglandtrail.org.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Animal Control Advisory Board

Three vacancies

The Town wishes to fill three vacancies on the Animal Control Advisory Board. This board has the authority to conduct hearings

as allowed in the Town’s by-laws and pose reasonable conditions as deemed appropriate. The ideal applicants may be a dog breeder, a dog trainer, a veterinarian, non-pet owner from the community, a medical professional specializing in emergency medicine, animal enthusiast or caregiver, pet owner and/or interested residents.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Communications Committee

Three vacancies

The Town wishes to fill three full member seats on the Communications Committee. The purpose of this committee is to develop a communication plan for the Town of Belchertown to improve information flow from the Town to the public. Experience with marketing, communications, and/or social media is highly preferred.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Zoning Board of Appeals

One Associate Member seat

The Town wishes to fill one Associate Member seat on the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA is responsible for hearing and deciding on applications for Special Permits, Variances and Appeals from decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer/ Building Inspector.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Historic District By-Law Commission

One Real Estate seat

The Town wishes to fill a full member seat (Real Estate Seat) on the Historic District By-Law Commission. The Commission has regulatory control over new construction, reconstruction, alter-

ations, movements, and demolition of all exterior architectural features of buildings and structures within the Historic District which are visible from any public street, public way, or public park.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Belchertown Family Center Committee

Three Active Voting Member positions

The Belchertown Family Center Committee is seeking passionate, service-minded individuals to fill three active voting member positions. This committee is charged with oversight of the Belchertown Family Center and its support programming for families, and is actively working to create a breadth of resources for our community.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Council on Aging

One vacancy

The Town wishes to fill one vacancy on the Council on Aging. Members of the Council on Aging coordinate programs and services for the elderly population and oversee the Belchertown Senior Center.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Belchertown Age and Dementia Friendly Implementation Group

One vacancy

The Belchertown Age and Dementia Friendly Implementation Group is looking to fill a vacancy for a community member. The main goal of the team is to implement the recommendations listed in the Age and Dementia Friendly Belchertown Community Assessment and Action Plan. The group meets quarterly at the Senior Center to prioritize, monitor progress and track outcomes.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Belchertown Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

One Community Member vacancy

The Town of Belchertown is accepting letters of interest to fill a community member vacancy on the newly developed Belchertown Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. The focus of the Task Force is to develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement for the Select Board to review and to consider adopting, to seek out opportunities to acknowledge and/or celebrate the diversity within our own community and to welcome

the whole community to join in, and to offer suggestions on how the town addresses specific or potential acts of violence, including hate speech, should such acts arise in our community, region, or state. Efforts should be made to include voices from the community or communities that are directly affected. Partnership opportunities with surrounding towns to strengthen regional or state efforts might also be explored. This is a seven member committee to include: A representative from law enforcement, a representative from Town Hall, and five community members representing diversity in one or more of the following areas: Racial and ethnic backgrounds, Social positions with respect to gender identity and sexual orientation, social positions with respect to disability, and Age groups and prior vocational experiences. All are encouraged to apply. Please submit a letter of interest to: Select Board, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007 or by email to selectboard@belchertown.org.

Deadline: Friday, March 29

Church hosts annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 23

BELCHERTOWN – Hop over to Christ Community Church, 1255 Federal St., on March 23 from 10-11:30 a.m. for the annual Easter Egg Hunt.

This is a free event for the community and registration opens at 10 a.m. There will be

several egg hunts based on age group (up to the age of 10).

In addition to the egg hunt, there will also be arts and crafts, face painting, snacks and more. Complimentary Easter egg bags will be provided at registration (while supplies

last).

The Easter Egg Hunt is for ages 10 and under.

For more information, visit www.gracefortheway.org or contact the church by emailing office@gracefortheway.org or calling 413-253-0292.



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|------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| May 4 | Kennedy Library | \$95 |
| June 11-14 | Boothbay Harbor Vacation | \$799 |
| June 29 | Lake George Cruise & Lunch | \$175 |
| July 13 | Cape Cod Canal & Lunch | \$130 |
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