

SugarFest *warms up* cold March day



By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The raw weather last Saturday did nothing to slow down the Fourth Annual SugarFest at Shattuck's Sugarhouse. The event drew out many food and entertainment vendors as well as many members of the public to see the Sugarhouse's operations as well as enjoy great food, entertainment and company.

Nate Shattuck has enjoyed seeing the event grow into a huge success, and now become the premiere event locally to open up the warm season.

Please see **SUGARFEST**, page 4



TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
There were long lines for maple syrup and other products at last Saturday's SugarFest held at Shattuck Sugarhouse.

FinCom backs free cash split

Plans to repay stabilization loan with health savings

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The Finance Committee backed a 50-50 free cash split, using Pathfinder assessment savings for operating costs and urging rapid repayment of a stabilization loan funded by unexpected health insurance savings.

“What we are proposing is that at the special town meeting, we repay the loan from stabilization.”

– Steve Williams
Town Administrator

The moves, made during the March 10 Finance Committee meeting, aim to soften looming cuts to town and school budgets while rebuilding reserves. Members recommended shifting the planned free cash policy, redirecting an anticipated \$80,000 Pathfinder assessment reduction into the operating budget and paying back a \$325,000 stabilization loan years ahead of schedule using current-year health insurance savings.

The committee's central policy move was to support a more gradual shift away from relying on free cash for operations.

Chair Brian Gibbons summarized how the town has been stepping down from using nearly all free cash in the operating budget.

“Basically, it's a few years ago, the Select Board and the Finance Committee voted to stop taking 100% of the free cash, certified free cash day of the year, and rolling it over with the operational budget,”

Gibbons said. “They dropped it down 80% the operational budget, 20% would go to stabilization. And then the next year, last year, which was (FY26)

60% would go to operational 40% would go to stabilization this year. For fiscal year 27 it was scheduled to go 40% operational, 60% stabilization.”

After discussion about the size of required cuts and the impact on both town and school budgets, the committee voted to recommend that the Select Board adopt a 50-50 split of certified free cash between

Please see **FINCOM**, page 3

School Committee backs Swift River lighting upgrade

Seeks town capital funding

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – School Committee members voted last week to move ahead with an LED lighting overhaul at Swift River while asking the town to help cover the three-year cost through its capital budget amid concerns about timing deadlines.

The School Committee approved the Swift River lighting project March 10 after learning that National Grid shortened the financing term from five years to three, increasing the district's annual out-of-pocket cost even as the work is expected to generate significant energy savings. The committee backed the project while directing administrators to seek town capital funding to offset the hit to the school budget.

Director of Buildings for School Department Eric Labeau presented the project, told the committee that missing a December 2025

approval deadline meant National Grid would now finance the work over 36 months instead of 60.

“They punched some numbers, it's going to end up costing us about \$15,000 for three years to do the lighting project.”

– Eric Labeau

He said the change means the district will pay about \$15,000 a year for three years, while still realizing considerable electricity savings.

“They punched some numbers, it's going to end up costing us about \$15,000 for three years to do the lighting project,” he said. “It won't affect this year's budget, but it will affect... next year's budget.”

Pressed by a committee member on whether that figure accounts for savings, Labeau said the district still stands to save roughly \$32,000 annually on utility bills for the life of the new fixtures.

“The savings is still roughly estimating \$32,000 a year in electricity for the life of the lights, which is 10 to 15 years,” he said.

He added that National Grid is offering substantial incentives.

“They're paying \$114,000 in incentives,

rebates, so the project still makes sense from an energy standpoint,” Labeau said. “It's brighter, better lighting, and we have, don't have to worry about changing light bulbs for, you know, 10 to 15 years.”

The shorter financing term, however, changes how the costs line up with those savings.

Labeau confirmed that under the original five-year financing structure, the annual payment would have been roughly equal to the annual savings, making it a budget “wash.”

Please see **UPGRADE**, page 5

Granby book sale continues to help fund library activities

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

GRANBY – Going on now through the end of the month, Granby Free Public Library is holding one of

its two big book sales. The sales, which are put on by the Friends of the Granby Free Public Library, use the funds to help pay for the many programs held at the library.

Caroline Barba, who is in charge of membership for the Friends group, was running the sale last Saturday and said after about three weeks of sales, the book sale had raised approximately \$3,000.

“We have been doing really well,” Barba said. “We have been making a lot of sales and moving books and other items, which helps us do many things here.”

There are multiple benefits to the book sale for the library. In addition to the funds raised, some of the items being sold at the book fair are books being cycled out by the library. By doing so, it allows the library to bring in new books. Other items include comics, CD's and DVD's that were for sale. While the library provides some of the items for sale, the Friends do a collection of items in the month leading up to the sale and use the donations to help with the fundraising.

Barba said the other great part of the sale is that it brings more foot traffic to the library, some people who do not normally come out on a



TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Melody Santos, 12, looks through the CD's and books available for sale at Granby Free Public Library.

Please see **BOOK SALE**, page 3



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COMMUNITY

BELCHERTOWN – The Woolies Silent Auction was a great success! Thank you to all who participated, and to The Woolies, for their beautiful, handmade donations. A total of \$959.00 was raised, 100% of which will go directly to library programs and building maintenance.

Frankenstein Reading Group for Adults

Tuesdays, March 31 - April 28, 2 to 2:30 p.m.

Have you ever wanted to take the time to discuss a novel in depth? In this five-session group, we will discuss the Gothic novel, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. The discussion will be introduced and facilitated by retired professor David Spector. Copies of the book will be available to check out at the circulation desk. Registration is required. Register online at clapplibrary.org or call 413-323-0417. A public screening of *Frankenstein*, the 1931 film starring Boris Karloff, will take place on Tuesday, April 7 at 7:30 pm.

For Teens:

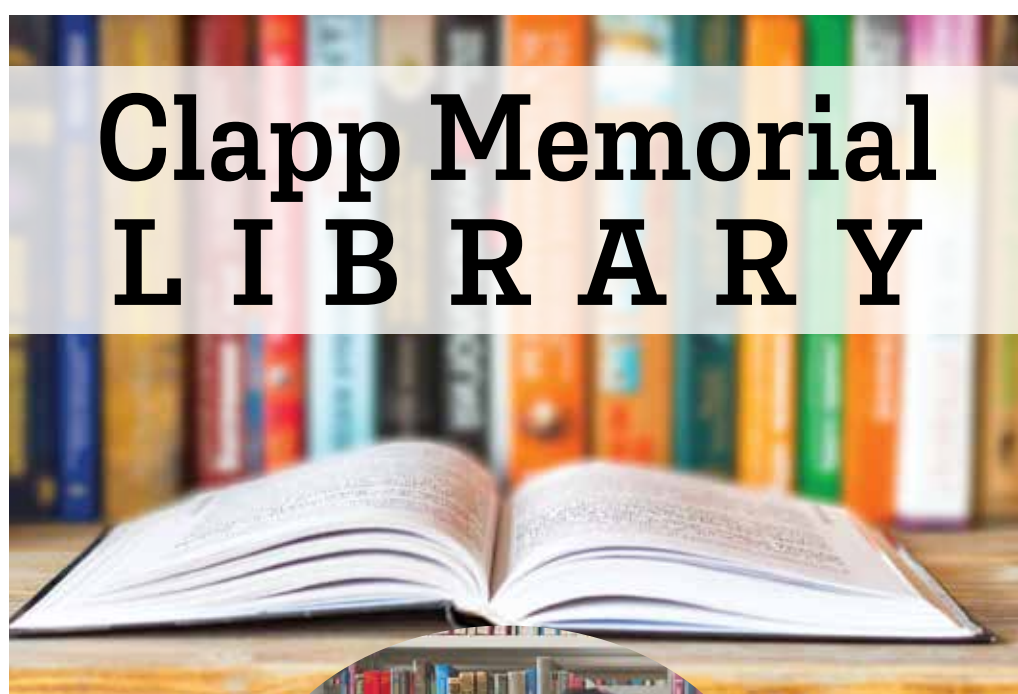
Free Food Fridays are back! Teens in grades 7-12 are invited to the library after school on the second Fridays of months March through May for free snacks as they visit and use the library! This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

D&D Afterschool

Adventures: Into the Abomination Vaults

Mondays through March 30, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

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



Please email any questions to tmanni-no@cwmmars.org

For Children and Teens: Magic the Gathering

Now - April 18: Saturdays, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

Join us for Magic the Gathering in the Activity Room. Bring your own deck or use one of our learning decks. Everyone is welcome, however players must be fluent readers. Players under the age of 10 must have a caregiver who is at least 14 years old on the Library premises. Join us for every session or just one - it's up to you! We will have two instructors to help get games started and assist with rules of the game. No registration is required. Questions? Please email Jennifer at jwhitehead@cwmmars.org.

For Children: Spring Story Times For Kids 3 Months to 6 Years Old

Stories and fun for children and their care givers! We'll tell stories, sing, dance, have finger plays, do crafts, and play instruments. Registration is required. Emails will be sent to confirm enrollment. When sessions are full, children will be put on a waitlist. Register online at clapplibrary.org/story-hour, or call 413-323-0417.

MONDAYS: March 23, and 30, April 6 and 27, and May 4

Babytime: 3 months to 12 months, 9 to 9:45 a.m.

Firststeps: 13 months to 24 months, 10 to 10:45 a.m.

TUESDAYS: March 24, and 31, April 7 and 28, and May 5

Toddler: 2 years, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

THURSDAYS: March 26, April 2, 9, and 30, and May 7

Preschool 3 yrs - 6 yrs 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Full STEAM Ahead Afterschool Club for Ages 8-11

March 19 - April 16: Thursdays, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Full STEAM Ahead will inspire kids to explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) through interactive activities and problem-solving challenges, all while learning about the value of persistence and creativity. Registration is required. Register online at clapplibrary.org/story-hour or call 413-323-0417. Children under the age of 10 years



must have a caregiver who is 14 years or older on the Library premises. Students who are 10 or 11 years old that would like bus transportation from a Belchertown Public School should contact Jennifer Whitehead at jwhitehead@cwmmars.org.

Children's Scavenger Hunt Every Month in 2026!

March's Theme: Author Julius Lester and Illustrator Jerry Pinkney

Prize: \$20 Gift Card to PlayNow! Toys in Ludlow

We're inviting children to participate in March's Scavenger Hunt! Look for book illustrations hidden in the children's area and write down the word you find with them. When you have all of the words, figure out the saying and enter to win this month's prize! One raffle ticket per child each month.

Clapp Memorial Library Hours:

Monday
9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tuesday
9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Wednesday
9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Thursday
9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Friday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday
9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Belchertown ViewFinder 2026 program underway

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown ViewFinder 2026 photography program is underway (www.belchertown.org/ViewFinder)! The project includes a series of workshops for adults and children and will culminate in a contest of photographs taken in Belchertown celebrating the beauty and heritage of our town. The workshops and contest are free and open to anyone.

A series of three adult workshops in April will focus on Smartphone Photography, Photography for Beginners and Advanced Photography techniques. They will be led by three noted Belchertown photographers and will include field exercises to put into practice what was just covered in the classroom.

Two workshops for children will be held in May at the Swift River Elementary School garden and will show the students how to gain an appreciation for nature, large and small, through the lens of a camera.

The ViewFinder 2026 Photo Contest kicks off on March 21 and will run until May 30. While anyone can enter, the submit-

ted photos must have been taken in Belchertown. A panel will review the submissions, and the winning photographs will be exhibited at the Clapp Memorial Library for the month of July.

The ViewFinder project, now in its third year, is a collaboration between the Clapp Memorial Library, the Quabbin Photo Group, the Friends of Lake Wallace and the Belchertown Creative Economy Initiative.

"We're really excited about this year," said Cyndi Harbeson, Director of the Clapp Memorial Library. "The partnership with the Quabbin Photo Group adds a whole new dimension to the project, and we are delighted to have their expertise in helping deliver the educational component."

"Education is a big part of what the Quabbin Photo Group is all about," added QPG President Mark Lindhult. "It was part of the mission when Les Campbell founded the club in 1984, and it has only become stronger over the years."

More information on ViewFinder 2026 can be found at www.belchertown.org/viewfinder

Your census is required to keep your voting status active

BELCHERTOWN – Unfortunately, there are still thousands of Town Census forms yet to be returned. If we do not receive your census, we are mandated by State Law: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVIII/Chapter51/Section37> to send out post-paid return postcards to each resident. This is not how we want your tax dollars spent. Help us save

your money by returning your census today. The second reason to return your census is that it will keep your voter status active, which is very important as we enter election season.

Please feel free to call our office with any questions on the importance of returning the yearly census or on your voting status. We are always happy to help. 413-323-0281.



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COMMUNITY

Belchertown Community Garden inviting registrations

BELCHERTOWN – Do you need additional garden space, fertile soil, or more sunshine? Want to raise your own chemical-free vegetables? Join us at the Belchertown Community Garden!

Individual, fully prepared, 300-square-foot garden plots are available to all Belchertown residents and gardeners from surrounding areas. We are located at beautiful Lampson Brook Farm, at 275 Jackson Street, Belchertown. Residents may obtain a plot for \$35 (non-residents \$40) for the season. Several plots will be made available to SNAP benefit recipients for half price.

The garden fee includes: plot preparation, compost for use in your plot, the use of shared tools in a well-organized tool shed, convenient access to water and ample parking space. The garden is a community effort



where each member also contributes a few hours of their time during the season

to setting up, maintaining, and cleaning up the common areas, such as our commu-

nity flower and herb gardens, or donating time to our plot dedicated to donations

to food pantries. The companionship and wisdom of your gardening neighbors are free! Join for yourself or purchase a Community Garden plot as a gift for your favorite gardener.

Our garden is a program of the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI), which leases the rich farmland of the former Belchertown State School from the State. All gardeners, beginner or experienced, are welcome. Depending on weather and soil conditions, the garden will be open mid-May through late October.

All applications must be received by April 6 and are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. A limited number of plots are available—so don't delay!

If you have questions or to receive a 2026 registration form, email BCGardenNews@gmail.com.

Open positions for local May town elections

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

- Board of Assessors - 1 seat open with a 2-year term
- Board of Assessors – 1 seat open with a 3-year term
- Board of Health – 2 seats open with 3-year terms each
- Housing Authority – 1 seat open with a 4-year term
- Moderator – 1 seat open with a 3-year term
- Planning Board – 1 seat open with a 5-year term
- School Committee – 2 seats open with 3-year terms each
- Select Board – 1 seat open with a 3-year term

Nomination papers are now available in the Town Clerk's office and are due back by 5 p.m. on March 30, 2026.

Quaboag Valley Relay for Life seeing more teams

BELCHERTOWN – The Quaboag Valley Relay for Life is looking for more teams, more team members, Cancer survivors, and donations for our Relay on May 30 on the Belchertown Common from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

You can form a team in memory or honor of a loved one or friend to raise donations for the American Cancer Society and raise awareness of this dreaded disease, Cancer. Cancer has touched everyone, and we need your help to rid the world of Cancer as we know it. If you are a survivor, we would like you to get registered and come for a walk with us on May 30. If you aren't able to walk, just come and hang out with us. All survivors who get registered will receive a free Survivor shirt and be treated to a free luncheon for you and a caregiver.

During our Relay this

year, there will be a big craft fair going on at the same time. This event also benefits the American Cancer Society. There will be many gift baskets you can purchase tickets to win. We have ordered great weather for this event too.

For each person who joins a team and donates or gets donations of at least \$100 will get a free HOPE shirt to wear with pride, knowing you have helped the American Cancer Society raise money for their many services to our Survivors. We like all team members to get a little donation, but you don't have to get the \$100 necessary to get the free HOPE shirt. To donate, form a team, join a team, or register as a survivor, please go to the following link: <http://main.acevents.org/goto/eleanorgray>. If you have any questions, please email ctellie@juno.com.

BOOK SALE from page 1

regular basis.

"We also get a lot of people who home school their kids that come and get materials they need for education," she said. "We also tend to draw people from surrounding communities are looking to purchase books."

Barba said the sale will conclude at the end of the month and some items will be discounted as the library seeks to liquidate as much as possible before the sale concludes and remaining materials are given to a vendor who recycles the unsold items in some fashion.

The Friends group sponsors a lot of programs at the library, including many children's activities such as magicians and the Forest Park Zoo recently visiting. She said it also helps with adult activities such as the knitting club that meets regularly. The Friends are also responsible for the funding the entire Summer Reading Program, which has events



TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Caroline Barba, a member of the Friends of the Granby Free Public Library, completes a transaction during the book sale last Saturday.

and challenges for children, teens, and adults.

The sale is ongoing Tuesday through Saturday

from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

FINCOM from page 1

operations and reserves for the upcoming fiscal year, instead of the previously planned 40-60 split.

Several members said maintaining long-term discipline is important, even while easing the transition this year, by continuing to set explicit annual goals for how much free cash is reserved versus used for operating costs.

A second major decision focused on repaying a \$325,000 loan from the town's stabilization fund, which had been used to cover unexpectedly high health insurance costs.

Town Administrator Steve

Williams said enrollment changes in the health plan drove down actual costs for fiscal 2026, freeing up a significant amount of money.

"In working with Superintendent Cameron, he's identified \$200,000 of health insurance money that can come back to the town. And this is FY 26 money. So, this year's Jill has been able to identify about \$100,000 on her end, which puts us up to 300 give or take a little bit," Williams said.

Williams said the administration's plan is to use those savings to pay back stabilization at a special town meeting.

"What we are proposing is that at the special town meet-

ing, we repay the loan from stabilization," he said.

He said repaying the loan quickly honors the commitment made to residents when the town first tapped the stabilization fund.

"The taxpayers were gracious enough to lend us that money out of stabilization, if you will. And I think we owe it to them to put it back as soon as possible," Williams said.

The committee voted to recommend to the Select Board that unspent fiscal 2026 health insurance funds be used to repay the stabilization loan, with the understanding that the actual transfer will require an article and vote at a special town meet-

ing.

The committee also addressed how to handle an expected reduction of roughly \$80,000 in the town's assessment from Pathfinder, the regional vocational school district.

Williams told the committee that, under normal circumstances, this type of fixed-cost change would simply lower overall expenses within the operating budget.

"Again, that would that's a fixed cost, ordinarily, that would have just been included. Operational budget, because it was set aside as a fixed cost and became available. There were public discussions about it, and it was suggested that we use

it for capital," Williams said [0:45:37].

Instead, he urged that the money be returned to the operating side to help offset cuts.

"I would recommend against that, because we know we have to borrow for capital this year, and I don't think it's going to be necessary to utilize that existing \$80,000 we already have a pretty good pool of money, cash on hand, if you will, once it's voted at town meeting, and then we're going to be borrowing. I am recommending that we put that 80,000 back into the budget," Williams said.

After discussion, Gibbons described how the committee

expects that money to flow.

"We'll go back to the operation budget and split 70 and split just like all our other operational funds," Gibbons said.

The committee then voted to recommend that the reduced Pathfinder assessment be treated as operating revenue, split according to the town's usual 70-30 formula between schools and municipal operations, rather than diverted to capital projects.

Taken together, the three decisions reflect a balancing act: preserving the town's long-term fiscal health while trying to avoid deeper short-term cuts.

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The Shattuck family has been in business for more than 50 years.

SUGARFEST
from page 1

"We are really blessed to have it become what it has," he said. "We are able to put it on thanks to a grant from the Belchertown Cultural Council. We also have many vendors who come out and support us."

The vendors, which included multiple food trucks that are local and from surrounding towns. Vanished Valley of Ludlow was also there, serving their locally-made beverages. The Sugarhouse was full of activity with people able to watch the operations and purchase maple syrup that was for sale as well. Sap gathering season is also underway, and visitors to the farm were able to walk by the many trees on the property and see the sap pipes and pumps all set up.

"What is really great is this whole town really supports this (event)," Shattuck said. "It was a grassroots effort from the community and there is a great vibe here."

Judi Shattuck said the vendor event represents the next generation and she is pleased to see the community come out for it.

"It's great to share what we have here," she said. "We have the perfect setting for this event."

For Irida Kakhitranova, who runs a Bfrogi business, the SugarFest is her first event of the year after being shut down for the winter.

"I love it," the Northampton-based vendor said. "I love this community and they do this event well. It's my first of the year and it really sets the tone for the upcoming year."

For Shattuck's and many of the vendors who attended SugarFest, the event was a precursor to the start of the Farmer's Market season, which will get underway soon.

Devon Farm, which is the home of Shattuck's SugarHouse had livestock available for viewing.



Nate Shattuck is proud to see his family host the SugarFest.



ABOVE: Paul Lussier feeds the fire of one of the boilers in the sugar house.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



LEFT: Nikki Sicard paints the face of Jordan Sharp, 9.



Tree sapping is underway.



Egg Roll Evolution was one of many food truck vendors on hand for the SugarFest, now in its fourth year.

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Watershed council to hold gathering March 22

PALMER – We have all heard Carpe Diem-seize the day, well our local rivers need us to step up to care for them as we enjoy their beauty.

Join the Chicopee 4Rivers Watershed, C4R, group as its members seek to continue their efforts to do that.

The first gathering in 2026 will be held on Sunday, March 22 from 2-4 p.m. in the Palmer Historical Cultural Center, 2072 Main St., Three Rivers.

Come hear what C4R has accomplished and how you can help to keep it going. They will review water quality monitoring, paddling trails, clean ups, trail stewardship, leadership needs, and more.

For more information, email chicopeewatershed@gmail.com.

K of C to sponsor Rosary March 29

LUDLOW—Knights of Columbus Council 3535 of Ludlow and Chicopee Council 18251 will sponsor a 5th Sunday rosary on Palm Sunday, March 29 at 12:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Ludlow.

The rosary will be held in the parish center chapel on 438 Winsor St.

All are invited to pray for world peace. Refreshments will be served following the Rosary.

UPGRADE from page 1

Labeau told the committee National Grid is tightening its LED programs and that the window to secure current rebates is closing.

“They’re saying that they will not be funding any rebates for LED light projects after 26 so we’re talking December 2026 we have to have the product completed by December,” he said.

That deadline, along with the desire to complete work while students are out of the building, added urgency.

“The project’s going to take about a month. The contractor has to order materials to sign an agreement with national grid. So that all takes a couple of months,” Labeau said.

During the discussion, one committee member questioned whether the lighting

St. Francis of Assisi’s announces its Holy Week service schedule

Palm Sunday
March 28 and 29: 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.

Sacred Triduum Services
Holy Thursday
April 2: As we begin the Sacred Triduum, we commemorate Jesus’s 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. The garden will be set up in a corner of the main Church.

Good Friday
April 3: 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 devotionals will be offered during the day:

Children’s Stations of the Cross will be offered at 11 a.m. for children in grades K-6 and their families. During the hours of noon to 3 p.m., all are encouraged to spend silent time in prayer. At 3 p.m., the Stations of the Cross will be prayed.

Holy Saturday
April 4: At 8 a.m., the com-

munity will hold a Prayer Service with the Rites of Preparation for those entering the Church during the Easter Vigil.

At 11:30 a.m., the Blessing of Easter Food Baskets will take place in the Church gathering space.

Easter Vigil
April 4: 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.



Sunrise on the Quabbin (photo by Ed Comeau).

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Free photo workshop at Pelham Public Library

PELHAM - The Pelham Public Library will be hosting a free workshop for beginner photographers on Saturday, March 21, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Whether you are using a smartphone, DSLR, or mirrorless camera, a free one-hour nature photography workshop at the Pelham Library will help you get more out of your camera and improve your photos.

Nature photographer Ed Comeau will lead a presentation covering core photography concepts that include composition, lighting, framing, depth of field, and more. The workshop is designed for beginners and casual photographers and focuses on techniques that apply across all types of cameras and devices.

Ed’s photography centers on landscapes and wildlife of the Quabbin Reservoir

region, as well as images from Maine, Alaska, and other locations. His work has been exhibited in a number of places in the valley as well as featured in the Country Bank calendar for the past two years. You can find his work at www.comeauphotography.com and on Instagram @edcomeauphotography.

The workshop is free and open to the public. No registration is required.

project should be treated as a town capital expense rather than coming entirely from the school budget.

“The only thing I think about is it sounds like a capital expense, and we had money on the town side put aside for just this kind of thing,” Committee member Jacob Hulseberg said. “Should we be pursuing having that capital planning so that it doesn’t necessarily come out of schools’ budget?”

Another member worried that the slower pace of the town’s capital process could jeopardize the project, given the hard deadline for completion.

“I would hesitate to do that, because this is so low expensive, and I feel like everything just takes so long, I’m afraid we would miss our opportunity,” said School

Committee Chair Heidi Gutekenst. “Yet it’s March.”

Labeau acknowledged the suggestion to seek capital funding but cautioned that the project would still need multiple layers of town approval.

Committee members ultimately settled on a dual approach: move forward so the work can be done in time to qualify for rebates and 0%

financing, while also asking the town to help pay for the project through its capital plan in later years.

“My suggestion is let’s find out. Maybe we don’t get the first year before maybe we get on the list for year two and three,” Hulseberg said. “We should be trying to get our capital expenses in front of these folks.”

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

When will I get full credit for delaying my SS retirement?

Dear Rusty:

The time is nearing that I want to move from my current Social Security survivor benefit to my own SS retirement benefit at 70 years of age.

I have been looking more deeply into the application of Delayed Retirement Credits and I have read that DRCs accumulated in the year that I turn 70, September 2026, will not be effective when I actually turn 70. Rather, those DRCs won't be paid until the following year. Can you verify that this is correct? I presume that if the DRC's are not applied at age 70, that they will be applied sometime after the first of the year and any increase will be paid retroactively.

Signed: Retiring Soon

Dear Retiring Soon:

The Delayed Retirement Credits you speak of have accumulated at the rate of 8% per year (.667% per month) since you reached your SS Full Retirement Age, which means that at age 70 your monthly SS benefit will be about 129% of the amount you were entitled to at your FRA of 66 years plus 4 months.

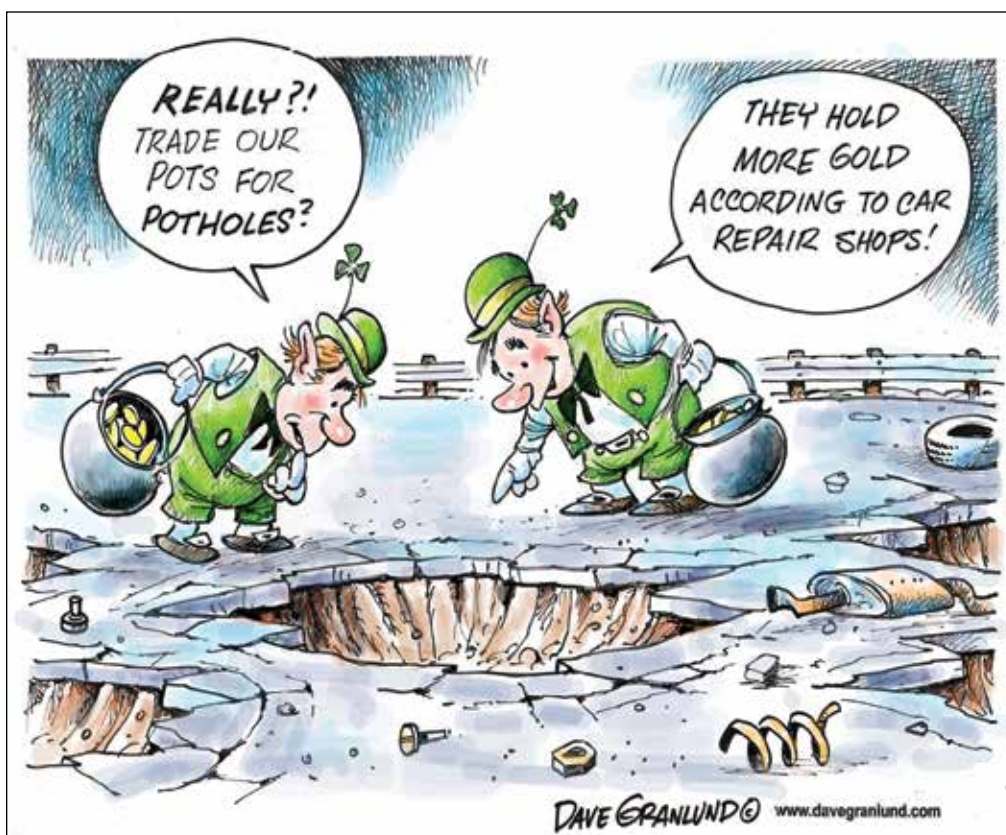
However, your understanding of how DRCs will work for you at age 70 is not correct. If you claim for your Social Security retirement benefits to begin in September 2026 (the month you turn 70) you will receive all DRCs, you have accumulated up to that point in time. In other words, you will get your full age 70 benefit amount immediately, including all DRCs earned until then, effective with your first SS retirement payment, which you will get in October 2026. What you have likely read about is that DRCs work a bit

differently for those who claim SS after their full retirement age, but before their 70th birthday month.

For those who claim mid-year but before age 70, only DRCs earned through the end of the preceding year are initially applied and DRCs earned during the current year are not paid until the following January. This results in a loss of some SS benefit between the time benefits start and the following January, because only the amount earned as of the end of the previous year are first paid, and the full number of DRCs earned during the current year are applied in January.

But, as is the case for you, when benefits are claimed to start in the month you reach 70 years of age, all DRCs earned up to the month of your 70th birthday are immediately applied. Congratulations on selecting a strategy which will maximize your monthly Social Security benefit.

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.



On the look out for a nice lawn

I'll be the first to admit that I don't have an especially nice lawn. Looking out the window further proves it.

It is early in the year and all, so the shades of brown I see are pretty common, but there are some lawns that are greening up nicely while mine is definitely not.

My mind always goes to thoughts of green as we approach St. Patrick's Day. I wonder if that's why my Irish dad enjoyed caring for his lawn so much?

One of his spring rituals was to rake it. I remember him out there working his way across the yard a little at a time, making pile after pile of dead grass, leaves and small sticks.

This was the just the first job in a season's worth of work aimed at growing good turf. Chances are that once the ground dries a bit you'll be out there too, clearing the lawn of winter debris and enjoying some long awaited sun on your back.

Find out what else you can do (and I should too) to achieve an attractive greenscape with a minimal commitment.

Don't mow so low, or as often. Mowing at a height

of about three inches will encourage a healthy lawn. Why? Taller grass shades out developing weed seedlings.

each week, more if your soil is sandy. Do the tea cup test to determine how much water your sprinklers emit and at what rate. Simply place a tea cup or other container on the lawn and turn on the sprinkler, check every five minutes or so until water reaches the inch mark.

Now you can set a timer, or turn off the sprinklers manually knowing your lawn has gotten its weekly drink. Most people know that early morning is the best time to water the lawn. By watering early in the day less moisture is lost to evaporation.

Grass is also less prone to fungal diseases because it has a chance to dry before nightfall.

Know your soil. A friend of mine who knew a lot about turf once told me that if I were to apply one thing to my lawn each season it should be lime. Grass can't grow well, or fight off diseases or bugs for that matter, if it isn't getting the nutrients it needs.

Many nutrients are bound up until the pH is corrected. Get a soil test and specify on the order form that you wish to grow grass, as results for

Please see **GARDEN**, page 13



It also makes large, established weeds more susceptible to mower damage (the more surface area of the weed that is removed, the more weakened it becomes.)

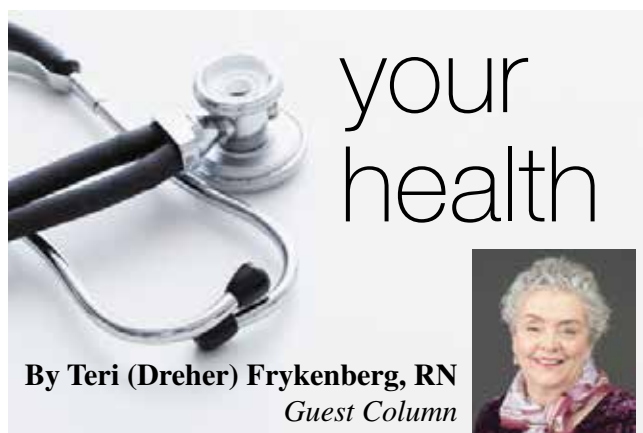
High mowing also fosters deep root growth. Deep roots sustain the lawn during periods of drought.

Keep mower blades sharpened for the cleanest possible cut.

Water efficiently and effectively. If you set up sprinklers each season to water the lawn for you, take some time early in the season to position them so that water isn't wasted on sidewalks or driveways.

Mark the location and set up will be a no-brainer each time.

To grow best, grass requires an inch of moisture



What is 'lifestyle medicine'?

We've known for decades that the foods we choose to eat and the habits (good and bad) we develop have a profound impact on our quality of life and health. At your regular appointments with your primary care provider, you are probably quizzed about your diet, alcohol consumption, drug use and level of activity.

Typically, doctors don't have the time during the 7½ minutes they spend with you to connect the dots and help you make meaningful changes in those aspects of your life. It's not their fault; most of them are at the mercy of insurers and corporate overlords.

So, it's usually up to us to change our lifestyle.

A branch of medicine emerged about 30 years ago – lifestyle medicine – in which an integrated group of practitioners, from internists to gastroenterologists to psychologists to nutritionists to pharmacists, supports people on this journey.

Lifestyle medicine gained momentum in the 2010s because of the explosion of chronic diseases, rising health-care costs, stronger long-term data linking lifestyle to health, and dissatisfaction with medication-only approaches.

By the 2020s, many major health systems began integrating lifestyle medicine clinics.

There are several lifestyle medicine practices in Massachusetts, including at Massachusetts General.

In 2004, the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM) was founded, and earlier this year

it launched a certification program for health-care professionals who want to bring the practice to their patients.

Lifestyle medicine focuses on what it calls six "pillars" to address the root causes, not just the symptoms, of chronic illness. Those pillars are:

- **Optimal nutrition:** A whole-food, plant-predominant eating pattern.
- **Physical activity:** Regular, consistent movement.
- **Restorative Sleep:** Prioritizing quality sleep for recovery.
- **Stress management:** Techniques to manage and reduce stress levels.
- **Avoidance of risky substances:** Quitting tobacco, limiting alcohol, and avoiding harmful substances.
- **Connectedness:** Maintaining positive, supportive social relationships.

Their goal is to treat, reverse and even prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease using evidence-based methods that may be used in conjunction with medication.

As long as you have a diagnosis of a chronic disease and are treated by a licensed health-care professional, it's likely your insurance company will cover care from a lifestyle medicine practice. Services like "wellness coaches" or "lifestyle programs" may not be

covered.

Now, if all of this sounds a bit like Make America Healthy Again (MAHA), the signature program of our current health and human services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., you're not wrong. Kennedy is a proponent of people exercising and eating healthier in order to take control of their own health.

So, there are areas where MAHA and lifestyle medicine overlap, but the ACLM emphasizes that it's a health-care approach, not a political movement.

Lifestyle medicine supports vaccines, research-based conventional treatments and standard medical guidelines. Practitioners would agree that improving diet, sleep and stress management is good public health policy, and those tenets exist independently of politics.

That said, the ACLM supports coming changes in Medicare that are in alignment with its goals. The Make America Healthy Again: Enhancing Lifestyle and Evaluating Value-based Approaches Through Evidence (MAHA ELEVATE) for Original Medicare, was announced in December. Launching later this year, it will provide funding for "evidence-based, whole-person care approaches" not currently covered by Original Medicare.

I don't think there's any-

Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the editor should be 350 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources. Send letters to: Sentinel, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 or via email to sentinel@turley.com. The deadline for submissions is Friday at 5 p.m.

Turley Election Policy

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

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

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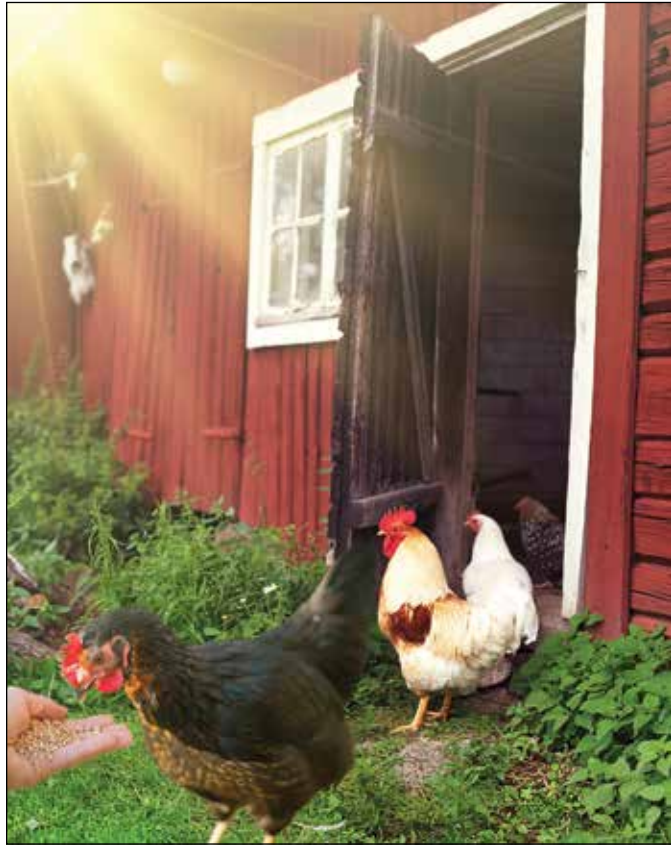
TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN REMINDS LIVESTOCK OWNERS:

2025 annual inspections underway, April 1 deadline approaching

Backyard chicken owners required to be inspected

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown Animal Inspector Sharon Kahl-Oey is currently conducting 2025 annual livestock inspections and is urging all residents who keep farm animals, including backyard chickens, to contact her immediately if they have not yet been inspected this year. The deadline for completing 2025 inspections is April 1, 2026, the date through which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has granted the town an extension.

Annual livestock inspections are required under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 129 (Livestock Disease Control). Under MGL Chapter 129, Section 7, the Animal Inspector has the authority to enter any premises where animals are kept. Section 15 of the same chapter requires every municipality to appoint an Animal Inspector approved by the Commonwealth's Director of Animal Health. At the local level, Belchertown's Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 145, Section 145-24 governs the keeping, raising, and breeding of animals in town and requires that all animal keeping be



carried out in conformance with Board of Health regulations, with adequate shelter, fencing, and conditions that do not create a nuisance or health hazard. The annual inspection is how the town and Commonwealth verify those standards are being met.

Inspections are administered through the

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health, as part of the Municipal Animal Inspector Program.

Why the extension was granted

Typically, Belchertown's inspections are conducted between September 1 and

January 1, the winter months when ensuring animals have adequate shelter, food, and water is most critical. This year, the Commonwealth granted Belchertown an extension due to the large number of animals to be inspected, the size of the land involved, and the fact that Kahl-Oey has been working from a farm and barn list that dates to 2016. She has until April 1, 2026 to complete all 2025 inspections.

Backyard chicken owners must be inspected

One of the most significant gaps on the 2016 list is the large number of residents who acquired backyard chickens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any Belchertown resident who keeps chickens or any other livestock is legally required to be inspected, regardless of the size of the flock or operation. Kahl-Oey is asking residents who have not previously been contacted to reach out proactively, as many may not appear on her current records.

Why inspections matter

Being on the town's livestock inspection list serves two important public safety purposes. First, in the event of a natural disaster, the town can identify and account for livestock in the affected

area and plan its emergency response accordingly. Second, in the event of an animal disease outbreak, such as the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) concerns that affected the region in recent years, officials can quickly notify owners of at-risk animal breeds so they know what to look for and can respond promptly.

Residents are not taxed based on the animals they own. This was a practice from years past but is no longer the case. The inspection is solely about animal welfare, public safety, and community preparedness.

What to expect during an inspection

Inspections typically take between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on the number of animals and the size of the property. At the conclusion of each inspection, Kahl-Oey provides the property owner with a three-copy slip from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health. The property owner retains the pink copy, Kahl-Oey keeps the yellow copy for town records, and the white copy is submitted to the state.

Kahl-Oey holds a Bachelor of Science in Animal Management, is trained by the state of Massachusetts,

and is a livestock owner herself. While she is not a veterinarian, her role is to verify that animals are properly housed and cared for, not to penalize owners.

If Kahl-Oey is working in a resident's area and observes livestock on the property, she may knock on the door to see if an on-the-spot inspection is possible. Residents are also encouraged to contact her if they have concerns about a neighbor's animals.

New residents and newly acquired animals

Residents who move to Belchertown or acquire livestock after April 1, 2026 should still contact Kahl-Oey to be added to the list. The 2026 inspection cycle runs September 1, 2026 through January 1, 2027. Residents should be aware that inspections are annual and each cycle stands on its own: those inspected in March or April 2026 as part of the current 2025 cycle will still be required to be inspected again during the 2026 cycle.

How to schedule

Livestock owners who have not yet been inspected for 2025 are urged to contact Sharon Kahl-Oey at 413-687-2814 as soon as possible to schedule an appointment before the April 1, 2026 deadline.



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COMMUNITY

Sensory Street coming to St. Patrick's Day Parade

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE — A new addition is coming to the 73rd Annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, as the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is partnering with the Miracle League of Western Mass (MLWM) and Magic for Maddie to introduce 'Sensory Street' along this year's parade route, which offers and provides a lower-stimulus viewing option for visitors with sensory sensitivities.

Providing insight into how this came together was Holyoke City Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti, who explained that the inspiration came from a trip to Ireland last year.

"Last year, a group of city officials and Parade Committee members took a trip to visit our sister city of Tralee, Ireland. We marched in their parade and saw that their parade offered a 'sensory-friendly' area for spectators, and we thought it was such a great idea," Murphy-Romboletti said.

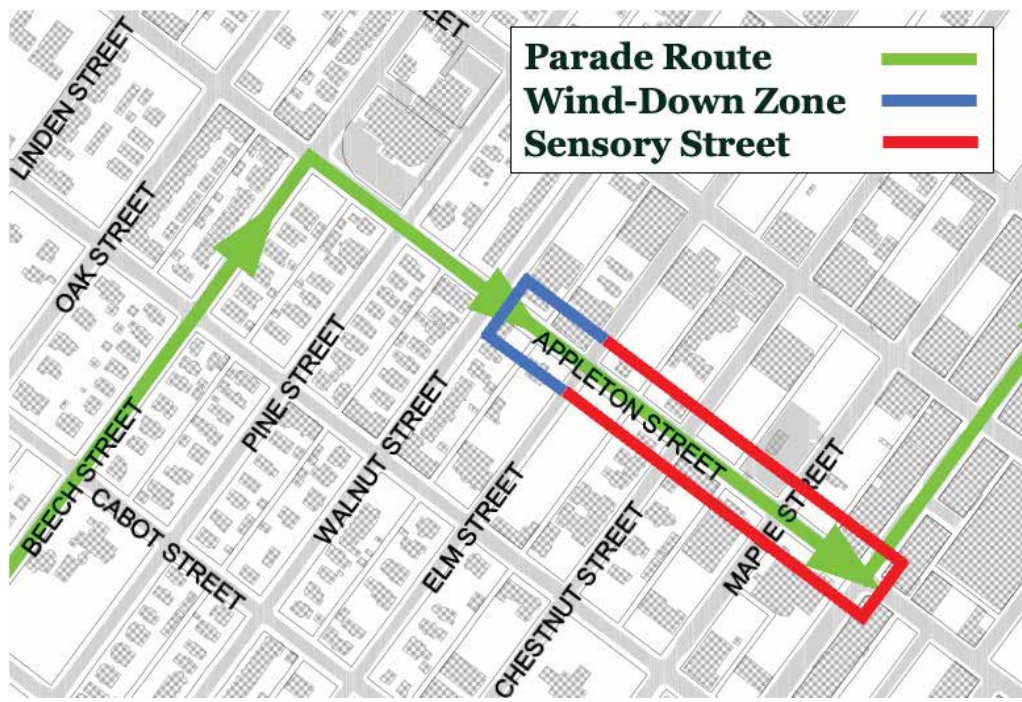
She explained that she pitched the idea to the Parade Committee, and they followed through.

"Our 2026 Parade President (Jim Wildman) and volunteers took the initiative and made it come to fruition, with the support of some amazing sponsors," Murphy-Romboletti said.

It was also revealed that Wildman then reached out to Kerry Parsons, a board member for the MLWM, who loved the idea.

"We're so excited, because this is such an incredible inclusion to the parade," Parsons said, something that Murphy-Romboletti also bestowed praise towards.

"This addition is a great way to make sure everyone gets to enjoy the parade, including families with children and individuals who may not love the big noises that can happen during the parade," Murphy-Romboletti said. "Simply, it's just another



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HOLYOKE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE COMMITTEE

Map of the Sensory Street Designated Zone.



Logo and graphic from the social media post.

er way for our city to say, 'you are welcome here.'"

Echoing similar thoughts was Wildman.

"This is a huge step for us, because I don't believe there is another St. Patrick's Day Parade that does this type of activity, and to have this area be inclusive for all these kids and adults who have issues with all the lights, sirens, and the noise, and for them to come in and join us is heartwarming," Wildman said.

Wildman added that the social media response and reaction to the announcement has been beneficial and sur-

prising.

"For example, this past week, we had our social media go out, and we had almost 500 likes and close to 1K comments within 24 hours," Wildman said. "We gained interest and traction from groups we've never heard of, who have shared the announcement, that are all talking about coming, and so we're hoping for a very, very good first year, and for people to show up and enjoy this with their families."

According to details, the full Sensory Street zone runs from Appleton Street, Elm,

Maple Street, and the wind-down begins to take shape at Walnut Street before the traditional parade experience returns on High Street. Both zones will be marked with signs along the route and highlighted on the official parade map.

No reservations are required to access Sensory Street, and the zone will be open to all spectators. Offering an in-depth analysis of what families can expect was Murphy-Romboletti.

"During the couple of blocks of 'Sensory Street,' folks can anticipate no emergency or flashing lights, no sirens or amplified alarms, bands will feature strings only (no percussion or brass), as well as reduced loud or sudden vehicle noises," Murphy-Romboletti said. "I think it's great that we can join others in these efforts because true inclusivity isn't about taking away an experience from anyone else; it's about creating new opportunities that encourage bringing more people into the fold."

The new initiative is believed to be the first of its kind for any major event held in Western Massachusetts.

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade kicks off later this month on March 22.

GRANBY

Granby 2026 town election nominations

GRANBY — Any person interested in seeking elected office in Granby must take out nomination papers from the Town Clerk no later than March 26. Candidates must collect signatures of 40 or more registered voters and return the nomination papers to the Town Clerk's office by Monday, March 20, 2026.

Office Vacancies for Town Election, May 18, 2026

- Select Board, one seat for 3 years
- Board of Assessors, one seat for 3 years
- Board of Health, one seat for 3 years
- Planning Board, one seat for 5 years
- School Committee, two years for 3 years
- School Committee unexpired term, one seat for 1 year
- Commissioner of Burial Grounds, one seat for 3 years
- Library Trustees, three seats for 3 years
- Library Trustees unexpired term, one seat for 1 year

1 year

Calendar of dates for the Annual Town Meeting and election

- Thursday, March 26, last day to obtain nomination papers.
- Monday, March 30, last day to file nomination papers with Board of Registrars for certification.
- Friday, March 27 is the last day to file with the Town Administrator for a Private Article for the May 11 Annual Town Meeting. For a private warrant article to appear on the Annual Town Meeting warrant, a petitioner must acquire 10 signatures of registered voters in town.
- Monday, April 13, last day of Registrars file town nomination papers with the Town Clerk.
- Wednesday, April 15, last day to withdraw nomination papers.
- Monday, May 11, Annual Town Meeting.
- Monday, May 18, Annual Town Election.

Office of Rep. Mindy Domb announces March office hours

AMHERST — Representative Mindy Domb (D-Amherst) office will host community office hours in March at the following times:

Tuesday, March 24, 4 to 5 p.m. at the Granby Free Public Library (297 E State St., Granby)

Friday, March 27, 4 to 5 p.m. at the Amherst Town Hall, 1st floor, (4 Boltwood Ave., Amherst)

Tuesday, March 31st, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. at the Amherst Survival Center (138 Sunderland Road, Amherst)

This is an opportunity for constituents of the Third Hampshire District to speak to the Representative and her team and to share concerns and thoughts on state legislation, and to seek assistance. There is no need to

schedule an appointment; constituents can stop by anytime during the hour to speak to Representative Domb or a member of her staff. If this is an urgent matter, please do not wait for office hours; you may want to call (413) 335-1362 or (617) 722-2060.

If you are unable to attend at these times or if you have a time-sensitive or private matter, Representative Domb's office can be reached via email at mindy.domb@mahouse.gov or via phone at (413) 335-1362 or (617) 722-2060. Please include your name, address, and contact information when reaching out to the office. Rep. Domb holds community office hours every month in the district and meets regularly with residents.

Sign carriers needed for Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade

HOLYOKE — The St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is calling on enthusiastic individuals, school groups, clubs, and community organizations to join the excitement of the 73rd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, Mar. 22, by serving as sign carriers. More than 100 volunteers are needed to help introduce each marching unit and proudly recognize the sponsors who make this beloved tradition possible.

Sign carriers lead the way for award winners, bands, floats, marching units, and divisions—bringing energy, visibility, and anticipation to the parade route. No experience is required; participants simply need to be 12

or older, upbeat, and ready to engage with the crowd.

As a thank-you for their time and spirit, each sign carrier will receive a 2026 Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade sweatshirt and a \$20 stipend upon completing the parade. It's a perfect opportunity for students, service groups, and community members to take part in a lively, meaningful local tradition while earning a little extra money.

"Being a sign carrier is one of the most fun and accessible ways to be part of Parade Day," said Jim Wildman, 2026 Parade President.

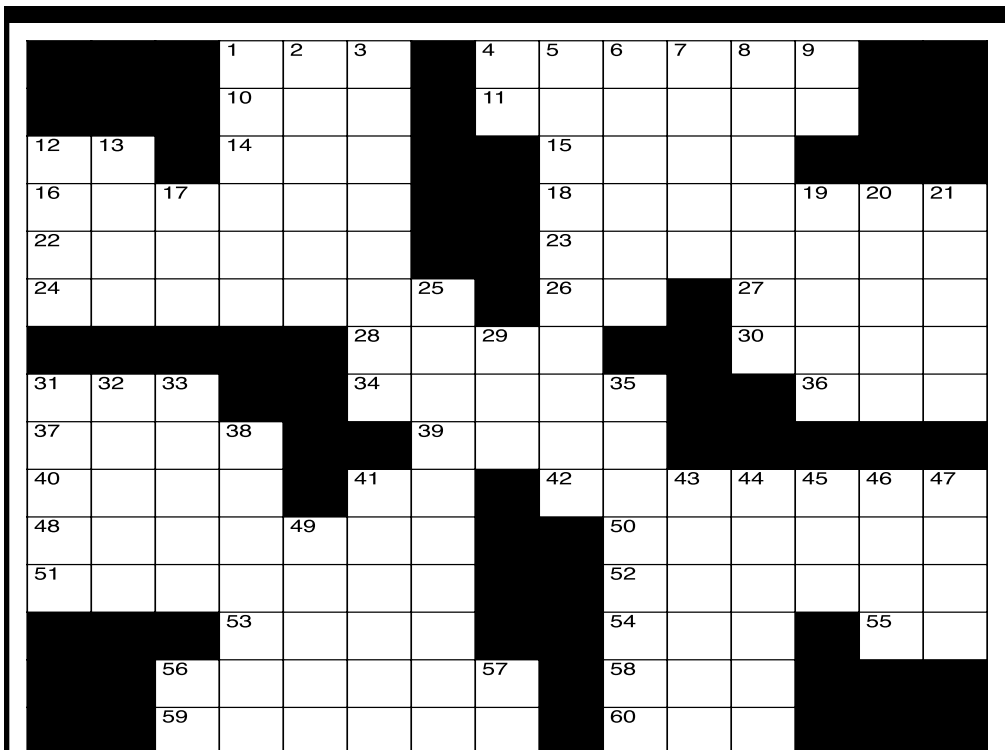
"These volunteers help set the tone for every unit that follows, and their enthusiasm truly fuels the crowd. We're thrilled to welcome new and

returning participants who want to experience the parade from the inside out."

Past sign-carrying groups have included scouting troops, sports teams, Key Clubs, National Honor Society chapters, school clubs, small businesses, and faith-based organizations. Spots fill quickly, and early sign-ups are encouraged.

Those interested can learn more and register at www.holyokestpatricksparade.com/sign-carriers or email holyokeparadesigncarriers@gmail.com.

The 73rd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade steps off on Sunday, March 22, 2026, following the 49th Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race on Saturday, March 21, 2026.



CLUES ACROSS

- Inclined to do
- Sketches
- Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- Atomic #58
- Dorm official
- Small Eurasian deer
- Southern constellation
- Workers' groups
- Former
- Excellent
- Romance language related to Spanish
- Reference
- Equally
- Dirty towels
- A cargo (abbr.)
- Ammunition
- You get one in summer

- Slang for trucks with trailers
- Swiss river
- Exchange rate
- British School
- College teacher
- Foreign Service
- Horse gear
- Cost to fly
- A salt or ester of boric acid
- Mocking
- One who bird-watches
- Concluding passage
- A major division of geological time
- Equally
- A way to produce
- Soak
- Laughed loudly and harshly
- Affirmative

CLUES DOWN

- Moth species phalonia ___
- Quantum of energy
- Break the law
- Location of White House
- Official cancellation of a decision
- Where rockers work
- Cut of beef: ___ mignon
- Nocturnal burrowing reptile
- Atomic #62
- Genus of evergreen shrubs
- Flowering plant of the legume family
- Inches per minute (abbr.)
- Tropical fruit
- Hot fluid beneath the earth's crust
- James ___, painter
- Popular dessert
- Payment (abbr.)
- Cuisine style
- Genus of true flies
- City in western France
- Arrogance
- One holding a position of command
- Weekday
- An evening party
- Print errors
- Not good
- Egyptian Sun god
- East German town
- Olfactory property
- Atomic #37
- "Pollock" actor Harris

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SPORTS

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Wrestling season nets many championships

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The high school wrestling season has come to an end, with many individuals and teams in Western and Central Massachusetts bringing home titles.

At the All-State Tournament held on Mar. 1 and 2 right in Springfield at the MassMutual Center, Agawam High School girls wrestling captured the All-State title with 86 points. Ludlow was 11th overall at 46 points. Stella Christopher captured the All-State title at 165 pounds, defeating Jordyn Reynolds of Greater Lawrence. Gabriella Ramos was a runner-up at

145 pounds. For Ludlow, Ella Libiszewski was the runner-up at 114 pounds. In the mixed-gender all-state event, Agawam would place 16th with 33.5 points. Minnechaug scored 26 points and both teams crowned an all-state champion. Jordin Agosto was Agawam's all-state champion with a top finish at 144 pounds. Minnechaug's Kai Ly also took an all-state title at 138 pounds.

Ludlow High School captured the Division 3 state girls wrestling championship with 97.5 points, crowning four state champions. Quabbin Regional High

Please see **WRESTLING**, page 10



Kara White keeps play moving around the perimeter.

Kaitlyn Curran looks to make a pass.



SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 10.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Annastacia Dixon sends a pass away.

Women's basketball season comes to a close

HOLYOKE – Earlier this month, Holyoke Community College Women's basketball saw their stellar season come to a close on Sunday afternoon, Mar. 1, falling to top seed CC of Rhode Island in the New England (Region XXI) championship game. The #2 seed Lady Cougars played well in their attempt to win a regional title but were on the wrong end of the 86-51 final score.

Holyoke had a tremendous season overall, finishing in

second place in the regular season New England standings before their runner-up finish in the regional championship tournament. Their postseason and title game appearances were the program's firsts since the 2010-11 campaign. Women's basketball finishes the year with an 11-4 regional record and a 15-8 overall record. They were 13-4 against fellow NJCAA teams. Eight players from this year's squad can return to play next season.

Rams suffer loss in second round of state tournament

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

GRANBY— A total of 41 girls basketball teams qualified for the 2026 Division 5 state tournament.

One of those teams was the Granby Lady Rams, who advanced to the Sweet 16 for the first time since the implementation of the new postseason realignment five years ago.

The postseason journey for the eighth-seeded Lady Rams came to an end following a 50-40 loss to the ninth-seeded Hoosac Valley Hurricanes at Sullivan Gymnasium on March 2.

"The girls had a great season and I'm very proud of them," said Granby girls varsity coach Dave Padavano. "Nobody expected us to go 19-4 this season. We won the Western Mass. Class D title, and we advanced to the Sweet 16. We missed too many shots and had too many turnovers in tonight's game."

Back in the middle of February, Granby captured the Class D championship title with a 64-56 win over Pioneer Valley Christian Academy.

The Lady Rams, who



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Kalli White fights to go to the hoop.

Amherst, and Southwick.

The Hurricanes (9-13), who were scheduled to face top-seeded Drury in an Elite 8 game, are the two-time defending Division 5 state champions. They defeated the Renaissance School, 64-57, in last year's finals at the Tsongas Center on the UMass Lowell campus. They also beat West Boylston 71-53, in the 2024 state finals.

The Lady Rams have now lost their previous twelve meetings on the hardwood with the Hurricanes.

A year ago, Hoosac Valley defeated Granby in the Western Mass. Class D semifinals by 41 points.

Ten of the twelve players listed on this year's Granby's varsity roster will be returning next season.

The only two seniors are Kaitlyn Curran and Mylin Laliberte.

"I'm very lucky to be a member of this basketball team and I love all my teammates," said Curran, who was a starting point guard. "I wouldn't want to play for another basketball team."

Curran and Laliberte, a reserve player, served as

defeated Keefe Tech in the Round of 32, entered the Sweet 16 contest with a perfect 13-0 home record. Their three regular-season road losses were against Ware,

Please see **RAMS**, page 10

Casavant shines for swim team

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—The seventh and eighth grade students at Palmer High School can take swimming as part of their gym class.

When Harper Casavant was in the eighth grade, Kellie Murphy, who's a physical education teacher at Palmer High, thought he had the potential to be a very good swimmer. One day, Murphy encouraged him to join the Panthers swim and dive team, which is coached by Brittany North-Marek.

"I played several sports growing up, but I never

swam competitively," said Casavant, who's currently a sophomore at Pathfinder Tech. "When I was in the eighth grade, Mrs. Murphy told me that I was a very good swimmer, and I should think about joining the swim team. She's the main why reason I decided to join the team."

At the end of his first season on the swim, Casavant qualified for the Western/Central Mass. championships as a member of three relay teams.

"I didn't perform very well at the beginning of that season, but I was able to pull it together during the second

half of the season," Casavant said. "I improved my skills with the help of coach North-Marek. She's a very good swim coach and is always very positive."

Please see **SWIM**, page 10



ABOVE: Harper Casavant goes for a win the medley relay.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



LEFT: Harper Casavant competes in the 200 freestyle during an event this year.

SPORTS

Thunderbirds inch closer to .500 with big comeback

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (24-27-6-2) rode their veteran forwards to a thrilling, come-from-behind 4-3 win over the Providence Bruins (45-12-1-0) on Sunday afternoon inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.



After potting seven in a win over Hartford a night ago, the Bruins wasted little time adding to their potent offensive weekend as Matthew Poitras cleaned up a rebound in the blue paint after Georgi Romanov made an initial save off of Ty Gallagher. Poitras' 12th goal of the year made it 1-0 Providence just 2:10 into the contest.

The Springfield power play provided a good response for the visitors at 9:34 when Juraj Pekarcik shuffled a rebound past Simon Zajicek following a Marc-Andre Gaudet slapper, tying the score, 1-1.

Unfortunately, the Bruins would restore their lead in short order when Matej Blumel surprised Romanov with a long slap shot just 1:18 later to make it a 2-1 game.

Springfield's special teams continued a strong first period, as the man-down unit successfully fended off two Providence advantages to keep the deficit at just one goal heading into the second.

With a carry-over power play to begin the second, Dillon Dube nearly got Springfield even with a one-time slapper that beat Zajicek but caught the iron. Romanov, meanwhile, had a strong showing in the period, especially early in the period, keeping his team within a goal by making nine stops in the period.

Zajicek and the Providence penalty kill stiffened on a third man-down scenario near the midpoint of regulation, and the 2-1 score remained intact heading to the third.

The third period began with Springfield penalty kill once again answering the bell on back-to-back Providence power plays to keep the score at a manageable 2-1.

As the third passed its midpoint, the T-Birds' most experienced leaders took

over, beginning at the 10:36 mark when Chris Wagner's torrid weekend continued as he threw a shot off a defender and past Zajicek to tie the game, 2-2.

Just 1:50 later, the T-Birds flipped the game upside-down when Wagner won an offensive zone draw directly back to Dillon Dube, who snapped a perfect shot under the crossbar to give Springfield its first lead, 3-2.

Romanov and the T-Birds' defense locked things down in the defensive zone, and Alek Kaskimaki hit an empty net after a clutch shot block from Wagner at 18:53 of the third. Blumel would get his second of the night for Providence, but only three seconds remained at the time of the goal, making it too little, too late for the Bruins.

The T-Birds' comeback marked the first time all season that the Bruins failed to win when leading after two periods. With their victory, the T-Birds now sit in the sixth and final playoff spot in the Atlantic Division with 13 games remaining in the regular season.

The T-Birds take a trip north of the border for their next two contests on Friday and Saturday in Laval and Belleville, respectively.

SWIM from page 9

North-Marek, who's an eighth grade math teacher, gave her thoughts about Casavant's abilities in the pool.

"Harper works extremely hard in practice and is a dedicated student-athlete," North-Marek said. "He's also a leader on our team and consistently demonstrates excellent sportsmanship. His growth as a swimmer has been truly impressive."

Prior to the start of his freshman year, Casavant transferred to Pathfinder Tech. He was still able to compete for the Palmer boys' swimming team because the neighboring high schools have a co-op.

"I thought that I would have more opportunities academically here at Pathfinder Tech," Casavant said. "I was also interested in learning a vocation. I'm currently taking HVAC. It has been an awesome experience and I'm very grateful to still be a member of the Palmer swim team."

During his first semester at Pathfinder Tech, Casavant took eight one-week exploratory classes. He had to rank his top five favorite classes and HVAC was his top choice.

"As well as Harper does for his swim team, he's equally as strong academically," said Pathfinder Tech Athletic Director Kevin Aldrich. "He's an honor roll student and is also a member of our student ambassador program. Harper has done a very good job of representing Pathfinder Tech."

Casavant, who lives in Palmer, qualified for two events at the Western/Central MA Championships as a freshman.

His sophomore season in the pool, which wrapped up in the middle of February, was very memorable. He qualified for the Western/Central Mass. champion-

ships in seven of the eight individual events, along with the three relay races. The only event that he didn't qualify for at sectionals was the 100-meter breaststroke.

"I was close to qualifying in the breaststroke, but I still need to do a little more work," Casavant said. "I'm hoping to qualify for that event next year."

A swimmer is only allowed to compete in two individual races and two relays at the sectionals.

Despite being one of the youngest swimmers at the Western/Central MA Championships, Casavant finished in sixth place in the 200 Freestyle and earned a medal with a time of 1:56.60. He also competed in the 50 freestyle race.

A week later, he competed at the Division 2 state meet, which took place at M.I.T. in Boston. He finished in 16th place in the 200 Freestyle, which is eight laps, with a time of 1:54.83.

"It was such a cool experience competing at states for the first time, he said. "I made a couple of changes with my stroke and was able to take two seconds off my time, which is a lot in swimming. I'm looking forward to qualifying for the states again during the next two years."

During the regular season, the Panthers boys' swim and dive squad squeaked out an 83-80 victory over Ludlow High School, which was held at the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club.

"Our meet at Ludlow was really close, and it came down to the final relay race," Casavant said. "We were able to win it, which connected us as a team a little bit more."

If there are six swimmers in a race, the first place finisher gets six points. Second place earns five points, and third place gets four points. Each swim meet consist

of eight individual races and three relay races.

Both the boys and girls swim teams normally compete at the same time. It usually takes between two and three hours to complete a swim meet.

Besides his coaches and teammates, Casavant has also received plenty of support from his parents (Kirsten & Jeremiah).

"Before the start of every race, I look for my parents," Casavant said. "They're also the first people that I look for after my races. They've always been my biggest supporters."

Harper's younger brother, Reese, is a member of the rec swim team. He also has a younger sister, Autumn.

The other members of the Palmer boys' Swim and Dive team were senior Shane Normoyle, senior Jack Shilosky, junior Simon Tetts, junior Derek Aldrich, junior Robbie Williams, junior Quinn Richardson, junior Jonas Toutant, sophomore Troy Lockwood, sophomore Noah Steinberg, sophomore Eddy Duggan, freshman Joshua Lisek, freshman Cristiano Garcia, eighth grader Emerie Marsh, seventh grader Owen Mauer, and seventh grader Alex Guryanov.

The members of the Palmer girls' Swim and Dive team were senior Hannah Roy, senior Scarlett LaRose, junior Neila Lachance, junior Jacklyn McNally, junior Maddy Roy, freshman Akasha Santos-Thomas, freshman Eva Becker, freshman Abigail White, eighth grader Samantha Opielowski, eighth grader Talya Verda, seventh grader Mido Penny, seventh grader Adrianna Centeno, and seventh grader Amelia Wentworth.

Verda was the only member of the Lady Panthers swim team to qualify for Western/Central Mass. Championships.

tournament, scoring 94.5 points. Christopher had the big performance by placing first in the 165-pound bracket. Ramos placed second at 145 pounds and Madison Minalga also had a runner-up finish at 185 pounds.

In the Division 2 state

Railers split weekend in Reading

READING, PA — The Worcester Railers HC (26-24-5-2, 59 pts) split the weekend against the Reading Royals (30-20-6-1, 67 pts) by a 4-2 final on Sunday, March 15th, in front of a crowd of 3,066 at Santander Arena. The Railers are back in action this Friday at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA against the Maine Mariners for a 7:05 p.m. puck drop.

Reading came out firing in the first with three unanswered goals. Connor Kurth (1-0-1) kicked things off for the Royals at 2:09 with a slapshot into the top corner of the net (0-1). Connor McMenamain (1-0-1) scored a rebound chip over Thomas Gale as the puck came loose in the crease at 8:29 (0-2). A third goal from Reading at 14:39 closed the period with the Royals up three-nil. Brandon Saigeon (1-1-2) finished off an initial drive from Vincent Sevigny at the outer edge of the zone. Ross Mitton (1-0-1) broke the scoreless drought for the Railers with an early third-period goal off a faceoff (1-3). Michael Suda (1-0-1) narrowed the Royals' lead down to a single goal with

61 seconds left on the clock with a shot that sent the puck past Keith Petruzzelli (2-3). A final empty net goal from Ben Meehan (1-0-1) at 19:35 in the third extended the Royals' lead back to two goals and cemented the 2-4 final.

The Royals opened a three-goal lead in the first frame. Connor Kurth (11th) drove the puck home with a slapshot to the top corner of the net at 2:09 on Reading's first shot of the afternoon. Connor McMenamain (10th) made the game 2-0 for the Royals as he finished off a rebound along the far side of the crease and chipped the puck high as Gale dove to cover. Brandon Saigeon (12th) closed out the period with a third goal on the power play, another rebound play set up by Vincent Sevigny on the outer edge of the zone. Worcester trailed in shots on goal with six to Reading's 10. Each team picked up one penalty in the first twenty minutes.

It was a scoreless second period for both sides as neither team was able to break past their respective goaltenders. Despite not finding the back of the net,

both teams kept the energy going with continuous conversations and physical blows. Cam McDonald collected a roughing call just as the period turned to its second half. MacAuley Carson dropped the gloves against former-Railer Artyom Kulakov. Both men earned themselves a double minor in the final five minutes of the frame. Reading outshot Worcester by one, nine to eight. Worcester led in penalties with three to Reading's two.

The Railers managed to narrow the gap created by Reading in the first, as Ross Mitton (5th) scored the first goal of the game for Worcester at 4:22 in the final frame. Mitton's shot came from a faceoff win by Ryan Miotto, who maneuvered the puck behind him at the near faceoff dot in the Royals' zone. Mitton quickly steadied the puck and skimmed the crossbar as he fired high on Keith Petruzzelli (3-1). Worcester continued to chip away in the offensive zone as Gale was called to the bench for

Please see **RAILERS**, page 11

RAMS from page 9

co-captains.

"Mylin and I are best friends. We've been playing on the same basketball teams since we were in kindergarten," added Curran, who scored three points in the sweet 16 game. "I really enjoyed helping the younger players on the team. They're very coachable."

The junior duo of Brenna Moreno (15 points) and Kalli White (13 points) combined to score 28 points in Granby's final game of the 2025-26 campaign. Their other scorers were junior Eleanor Szlosek (5 points), freshman Rowan Cook (4 points) and Curran (3 points).

Both teams struggled offensively during the first eight minutes of the contest.

The Lady Rams were trailing, 3-2, before Moreno, who scored 11 first half points, was fouled while attempting a three-pointer from the left corner. She made all three foul shots.

Then Curran hit a jumper from the top of the key. She also made a free throw with 21.6 seconds left in the opening quarter which tied the score at 8-8.

Granby took the lead for the final time at 12-10 two minutes into the second quarter when White converted an inside hoop.

Hoosac Valley began to pull away at that point by scoring eleven unanswered points.

Sophomore Genevieve Lagess, who led her team with a game-high 18 points, scored seven of the eleven points.

Freshman Gianna Witek (9 points) also contributed with a lay-up and a pair of free throws, which gave the visiting team a 23-13 advantage late in the second quarter.

During the final minute of the first half, Moreno drained back-to-back 3-pointers, which closed the gap to 23-19 at the break.

Granby's momentum didn't carry over into the second half, as the Hurricanes built an eleven point lead (30-19) with the help of a 7-0 spurt during the first three minutes of the third quarter.



TURLEY PHOTOS
BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Brenna Moreno sends a pass away.

"Red Auerbach used to say that a team needs to win the first two minutes of each quarter," Padavano said. "We shot 1-fo-15 from the field in the third quarter. You're not going to win very many games shooting that poorly."

Granby made five foul shots in the third quarter before Moreno knocked down her third 3-pointer of the contest.

The Lady Rams outscored the Hurricanes 13-12 during the final eight minutes of the contest, but they couldn't get any closer than nine points.

The returning members of the Granby girls' basketball team will be looking to make it a little bit farther in the Division 5 state tournament next year.



Ellie Szlosek sends a three-point attempt away.

WRESTLING from page 9

School was ninth overall with 36 points. South Hadley finished with 18 points and Holyoke with 16 points in the meet.

Ludlow's champions were Libiszewski at 114 pounds,

Samantha Bertini at 120 pounds, Ellianna Williams at 145 pounds, and Riley Morais at 152 pounds. Quabbin had one champion with Kailynn Schuster scoring the win at 138 pounds.

Agawam took second place in the Division 2 state girls

championship, Agawam was the second-best finisher from Western Mass., finishing fourth overall with 96 points, and crowning one runner-up in the field. Minnechaug was a distant 14th with 52 points. The Falcons' Ly won the state championship at

138 pounds, while Agawam's Ryan Sexton placed second. In the Division 3 state championship, Holyoke placed ninth overall with 69 points, Ludlow was 25th with 28 points, Quabbin 26th with 27 points, and South Hadley and Belchertown also regis-

tered points in the competi-

tion. Holyoke would place two wrestlers as runners up. Steven Santiago was the second-place finisher at 120 pounds and Parker Brunelle was the runner-up at 285 pounds.

tion. Holyoke would place two wrestlers as runners up. Steven Santiago was the second-place finisher at 120 pounds and Parker Brunelle was the runner-up at 285 pounds.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SEASON COMES TO A CLOSE



Tatiana Zuniga heads across the court.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Johnays Andrades gets the open layup.



Mileidy Rosado heads into the paint.



Ware's Emily McGrail reaches out for a rebound during recent play.

More players wanted for Pioneer Valley Baseball



SOUTH HADLEY – The Pioneer Valley Baseball League, an adult baseball league for players who are age 18 and over, is now fully open for registration for the 2026 season.

The adult league will be administered by the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, and a registration link is on the home page of the league's website www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Thought it will be under the Quabbin umbrella, there will be no major changes in how the league is operated.

This year, the PVBL will have a 22-game regular season schedule followed by a double-elimination play-offs. The league, which had five teams last year and had to utilize multiple byes throughout the season, will be fielding a sixth team this season.

There are several spots open for that sixth team, so players interested in joining the league should get signed up as soon as possible to claim a spot.

The league is a wood-bat only league utilizing playing under regular baseball rules though all players do

bat. The league operates on a Saturday-Tuesday schedule. Games are played on Saturday mornings with 10 a.m. starts typical and on Tuesday evenings with start times in the 5:30 to 6 p.m. range. The league will start play in late April and run through the end of August. There are slots open for both full-time players and part-time players. The fee for full-time players will be \$260 with part-time players getting up to 11 games for \$130. Fees paid go toward the operation of the league, paying for insurance, umpires, fields, and baseballs. No one profits in any way.

In addition to the new sixth team, there are limited open roster spots on the other teams in the league, so get your registration in as soon as possible to participate in this season.

Games are played at ballfields throughout the region from as far south as Southwick's Whalley Field, through South Hadley's Beachgrounds and up north at Frontier Regional High School in South Deerfield.

For any questions, please go to the league website for more information. The league hopes interested players will come out and join the fun this spring and summer.

Registration now underway for QVBL

SOUTH HADLEY – Registration has opened for the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th

game with an opponent to be determined as the league's board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall

league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration is live at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

RAILERS from page 10

the extra attacker. Michael Suda (3rd) nabbed a second goal for the Railers from the left point, his shot sent past Petruzzelli for a narrow 2-3 game. An unexpected turnover in Reading's zone, as

Declan McDonnell's stick snapped while he tried to maintain puck possession, led Ben Meehan (9th) to a fourth and final goal for the Royals. Meehan sent the puck sailing from along the near boards into the unattended Railers' net as

the final seconds of regulation ticked away. Final shots were 29-27 in favor of Reading. Worcester led in shots for the period with 13 to 10. MacAuley Carson and Jacob Frasca earned the sole penalties awarded to each team in the period.

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FRIDAY AT NOON

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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

LAND WANTED

SEEKING 8-20 PEACEFUL ACRES in Central MA for pet memorial sanctuary. Especially interested in lease-option, phased sale, or seller financing. Respectful, serious inquiry. Patrick 1 508-735-3232 | founder@rainbow-meadow.org

FOR RENT

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development " HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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17	18	19	20 Base Price \$26.00
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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
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Circulation: 59,000

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POLICE LOGS

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 155 calls for the week March 6, through March 12. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, March 6

12:04 a.m. – A motorist reported a single vehicle rollover accident on Ferry Hill Road. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

9:54 a.m. – A resident received a call from Bank of America fraud division. They wanted them to buy Apple gift cards to rectify the issue. They were told it was a scam.

5:52 p.m. – A motorist reported that someone hit their vehicle in the CVS parking lot.

Saturday, March 7

10:15 a.m. – A caller reported that a vehicle slid off the roadway on Carver Street. The person said the vehicle wasn't a traffic hazard and they will arrange a tow to remove the vehicle.

Monday, March 9

6:45 a.m. – A motorist reports a vehicle struck a deer. There were no injuries.

Tuesday, March 10

7:46 a.m. – A motorist reported a minor two-car accident. There were no injuries.

3:50 p.m. – While on patrol, observed a motor vehicle with an expired inspection sticker. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a civil

citation.
6:04 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer performed a random license plate query. The registration came back revoked due to no insurance. The vehicle was stopped and the operator was issued a criminal citation.

Wednesday, March 11

6:42 a.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident at East Street and New Ludlow Road. There were no injuries.

12:17 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed that the vehicle was traveling 55MPH in a 35MPH zone. The operator was stopped and issued a civil citation for speeding.

9:01 p.m. – A motorist reported striking a deer. There were no injuries.

OBITUARY

Devon G. Coutu

BELCHERTOWN – Devon G. Coutu of Belchertown passed away on February 27, 2026, following a brief illness.



Devon leaves his loving parents, Deb Coutu and Diahann Wimmer. He is also survived by his cherished grandparents, Diane Coutu and Steve Davenport; his step-siblings, Emily, Ty, and Eli; as well as a veritable army of people who supported him throughout his life and cared for him deeply.

Devon's larger-than-life presence, impish grin and unique sense of humor brought laughter, warmth, and energy to everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. He loved making and enjoying all

possible variations of coffee and considered himself true connoisseur. As a passionate music enthusiast, he was rarely spotted anywhere without his treasured headphones.

Family and friends are invited to gather on Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Byron Keenan Funeral Home & Cremation Tribute Center, 1858 Allen Street, Springfield, MA 01118. A Celebration of Life service will follow at 3 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Devon's memory to Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, where Devon proudly volunteered during high school, by visiting www.lorrainessoupkitchen.com.

DEATH NOTICE

Coutu, Devon G.
Died Feb. 27, 2026
Services March 28, 2026 1 to 3 p.m.
Byron Keenan Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 1858 Allen St., Springfield.

The Sentinel
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

GARDEN from page 6

flower or veggie gardening may differ.

Based on the results of your test, recommendations will be made as to the type of lime to use and at what application rate. For more information contact the UMass Extension or www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest.

Here are some interesting grass facts: Did you know that according to a poll (sponsored by Briggs and Stratton) 64% of homeowners wish they had a better lawn? Or that 63 million households own at least one lawn mower?

The Professional Lawn Care Association estimates that a well-maintained lawn

can increase the value of a home by up to 20%.

This was probably of little concern to Presidents Washington and Jefferson... they were the first to have lawns as we know them today but they were maintained by sheep!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge

School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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The Sentinel

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Probate and Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
(413)586-8500
Docket No.
HS26P0139EA
Estate of:
Judith A. Swimm
Date of Death: 01/12/2026
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

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

The Petitioner requests that **Craig Swimm of Ludlow, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/10/2026**. This is **NOT** a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

WITNESS, Hon. **Diana S. Velez Harris**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 13, 2026
Mark S Ames,

Register of Probate
03/19/2026

NOTICE OF INTENTION OF SELECT BOARD TO LAY OUT A TOWN WAY AND PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 82, Sections 21 through 23, the Select Board of the Town of Belchertown intend to lay out as a town way, a certain street in Belchertown, MA identified as Pepper Ridge Drive, all prepared for The Inhabitants of the Town of Belchertown, as shown on an As-Built Plan for Pepper Ridge Drive, dated October 20, 2025 prepared by RLA, R Levesque

Associates, Inc., and recorded at the Hampshire Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 251, Page 21, on November 21, 2025. This plan is available for inspection at the office of the Town Clerk, Lawrence Memorial Hall, Belchertown, Massachusetts.

You are invited to attend a public hearing to be held by the Select Board in the Select Boards Meeting Room, First Floor of the Lawrence Memorial Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, on **Monday, April 6, 2026 at 6:50pm.**

The Select Board will determine the boundaries and measurements of the ways, file the same in the office of the Town Clerk and submit the resulting layouts for acceptance at the next

Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2026.

TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN SELECT BOARD

Lesa Lessard Pearson, Chair
Jennifer D. Turner, Vice-Chair
Nicole Miner, Clerk
Whitney Jorns Kuhnlenz, Member
Jonathan Ritter, Member

03/19, 03/26/2026

Find it in the Classifieds

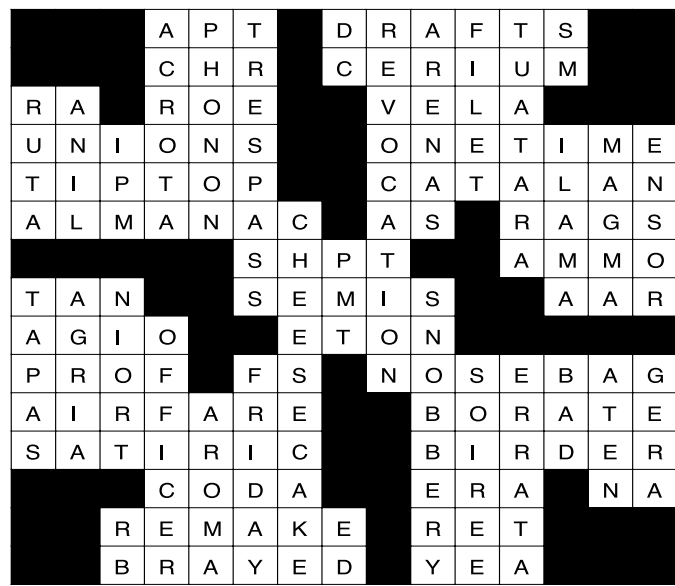
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Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.



PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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