

FIRST FORAGING WALK conducted at library

By Ben Hernandez
bhernandez@turley.com

GRANBY – Saturday, May 30 marked the first foraging event at the Granby Free Public Library. Resident forager Arianna Alexandra Collins conducted a walk around the library campus to identify edible and medicinal plants. During the interactive lesson, Collins not only pointed out what was edible on campus but also invited participants to sample test what was safe to eat without preparation.

Collins started her career as a naturals educator at the Bonnie Vail Environmental Education Center in Brattleboro Vermont and learned her craft working for “different institutions” around Massachusetts. She has 30 years of experience identi-

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White Clover is another such
usable plant for various
purposes.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Arianna Collins shows off edible foliage during her demonstration.

Selectboard adopts AI rules

Events calendar
formalized, eyes
redevelopment

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The Selectboard on Monday adopted the town’s first artificial intelligence policy, formalized a fast-growing community events calendar and backed key redevelopment grants for Carriage Grove and an industrial parcel off Route 21, while also retooling its annual awards program.

The meeting mixed policy work on emerging technology and communications with nuts-and-bolts votes on borrowing, licenses and appointments. Board members also signaled they want to more visibly celebrate town employees and volunteers, potentially tying future honors to the fall town fair and parade.

AI policy sets
guardrails, not a ban

After months of committee work and legal review, the board voted unanimously to adopt an artificial intelligence policy governing town employees and committees.

Communications
Committee Ed Comeau,
who helped draft the policy,

emphasized that it is meant to evolve along with the technology.

“We recognize that this is going to be a rapidly evolving policy, just because AI is so rapidly evolving,” he said. “We wanted to come up with one that’s not too restrictive yet puts up some guard rails as to what people, the employees can and can’t do, and not just the employees, but committees as well.”

The policy allows staff to use tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot or Gemini but bars uploading “sensitive information” and requires that humans review any AI-generated material before it is released.

“The last set of eyes have to be human on anything you put out there,” he said, adding that staff “can’t upload...Belchertown information” that is confidential and “can’t use it to generate original graphic content.”

Town Manager Steve Williams backed the policy as both necessary and flexible.

“I think going forward it’s...going to be continually reviewed,” Williams told the board. “I wholeheartedly support the board adopting this policy.”

School employees are excluded for now, but board

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page 11

Selectboard backs 20-car limit for West Street used-car lot

Trash contract,
animal control
case advances

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

GRANBY – The Selectboard approved a full 20-car Class II used-car license for a West Street service station, endorsed a new town-wide trash and recycling contract with USA Municipal Collection and moved to escalate enforcement in a long-running animal control case ahead of next week’s annual town meeting.

“I would hate to see the board decide to limit, take 25% of your business away from you right off the bat.”

– Jeffrey Lawson

The board’s decisions came during a roughly 70-minute session that ranged from curbside collection logistics and conservation talks to a pending Open Meeting Law complaint and

preparations for town meeting articles and outreach.

Used-car license clears after debate over parking, safety and process

After extended back-and-forth between public safety officials, the Planning Board chair and the applicants, the Selectboard voted to grant Smith Merrill Inc. a Class II license allowing up to 20 used vehicles for sale at 161 West State Street, matching the Planning Board’s earlier site plan approval.

Board Chair David Labonte opened the discussion by stressing concern that the station’s lot could become overcrowded with the addition of used-car inventory.

Police Chief Kevin O’Grady told the board that he, the fire chief and the building inspector had walked the site and were comfortable with 15 clearly defined spaces for used cars, citing emergency access and potential congestion as reasons to start below 20.

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Former custodian, artist remembers school art

By Ben Hernandez
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BELCHERTOWN – The upcoming closure of Cold Spring School is a bitter-sweet experience for former custodian and artist Ron Duford. During his tenure at the school, Duford created a number of unique artworks for the elementary school on breaks and after school hours, which garnered community attention in 2004.

With the upcoming closure, Duford reflected on his artistic legacy at the school and what the future holds for the building.

“All the parents would come in and watch me every day,” said Duford.

“The superintendent would come in and actually watch me paint.”

Duford reminisced on his old position, a day shift janitor at the school. He mentioned there wasn’t much to do during the day, which necessitated a way to “keep yourself occupied” during

down time. Duford is a life-long artist who dabbled in sculpting and painting. The project to paint the school was one prompted by the school’s desire to be “colorful and aesthetically appealing,” according to a Sentinel article dated October 2, 2004.

“I always drew,” said Duford. “It keeps me busy, you know, the drawing and painting and sculptures.”



A jungle themed mural painted on the wall.

The local artist stated the inspiration came from noticing empty bulletin boards around the school. He noted how they were neglected, which fostered a need to do something with them.

“I’m looking at these bulletin boards and they’re not putting anything on them,”



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Former custodian and local artist Ron Duford poses with a Sentinel feature article from 2004.

Duford said. “It was very rare to see anything on there. The kids would do a project, then they’d put them on there. But they used to put more of the pictures on the walls themselves rather than the bulletin boards.”

Intent on having the bulletin boards serve a purpose, the artist created murals as a showcase for the children. Common themes included underwater creatures, familiar sights such as school buses and popular characters

such as Winnie the Pooh and Disney characters. One such massive mural was 15 by 5 feet long and featured many famous Disney characters.

“It goes to Pocahontas and Cinderella and all the other dwarves and Pinocchio and the whole castle itself,” said Duford. “It really came out good, in my opinion.”

As of press time, Cold Spring School is set to close on June 18. A ceremony will be held on the campus at 5:30 p.m., where light

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Farmers Market set to open this Sunday

BELCHERTOWN – Opening Day of the 2026 season of the Belchertown Farmers and Artisans Market is Sunday, June 7 at 10 a.m. on the Belchertown Common (corner of Rt. 202 and Jabish Street). Organizers are excited to welcome the community back to the Common with a fresh new season filled with local farms (14 of them!), handmade goods, baked treats and drinks, food trucks, artisan products, and a chance to connect with neighbors and support local businesses.

Brittini Robidoux, Manager of the Belchertown Market is looking forward to opening day. “We have an amazing opening day on deck, and an amazing 2026 season planned!” With 14 farmers signed up for the market this year, the season promises to be one of the best yet. Live music every week – opening day will be Bruce Colegrove.

To help make it a great day for everyone, organizers have a ‘Dino Dig’ planned for kids on opening day. And every week will be the 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. ‘Sensory Hour’ for those that prefer a quieter market setting.

Belchertown Farmers & Artisans Market accepts SNAP and HIP benefits – stop by Brittini’s Market Manager tent for information



BENEFITS ACCEPTED

on how to use those benefits. Market organizers wish to thank their sponsors for again making a ‘\$10 Snap Match’ every Sunday available to those that qualify.

The market runs every Sunday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the beautiful Belchertown Common. Bring a chair and spend time in your commu-

Follow Belchertown Farmers Market on Facebook and Instagram to get all the latest updates and get to know their amazing vendors and wonderful products. Sign up for their weekly Newsletter to keep up-to-date on products available each week – visit www.belchertownfarmersmarket.weebly.com to easily sign up for the Market Newsletter.

Cyclists pedal miles and ‘peddle’ donations to help fight cancer

BELCHERTOWN – Back for a second year, a group of six Western Mass cyclists have banded together to raise money to fight cancer.

Team (413) PMC, made up of Jim Gosselin (South Hadley), Jill Giebutowski (Monson), Ruby Schmerling (Amherst), Maria Burke (Holyoke), Jenn Gilburg (Holyoke), and Sarah Aasheim (Belchertown), will be riding 192 miles in the Pan Mass Challenge (PMC) this August to fund the cutting-edge cancer treatment and research provide by the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI). The PMC is the single biggest supporter of Dana Farber, having raised over \$1 Billion since the ride’s inception in 1980. Team (413) PMC’s goal is to raise \$40,000 this year.

Like many PMC riders, all six members of the team have a personal connection to cancer. Sarah and Maria are survivors; Maria is currently in treatment at Dana Farber. Jim, Ruby, and Jenn have all lost close family members to cancer. Jill is motivated to ride in honor of many people in her life who’ve faced different forms of cancer.

Riding the PMC for the 17th straight year, Jim (who serves as the team captain) noted, “When my mom passed, there were not many treatment options and I felt like I needed to do something to help change that. The PMC is an amazing fundraising event and every dollar raised goes directly to research or treatment at Dana-Farber.”

Commenting on their “413-forward” branding, Sarah shared, “People here in Western Mass are not as familiar with the PMC and its mission, so we wanted to

show off our Western Mass pride by adding “413” to our team name. We all benefit from having Dana-Farber in our backyard, so our goal is to shine a light on the outstanding care and hope they provide when those facing cancer need it most.”

This group of six friends will be cycling hundreds of miles this spring and summer, to prepare for the “big ride” the first weekend in August. They ride in gratitude for the care they and their loved ones have received and to “pay it forward” to help others. Realizing that most people have a connection to cancer through their own diagnosis or that of a friend or loved one, this team of riders shares Dana Farber’s commitment to a cure – and they are pedaling the miles to support this goal.

To support their fundraising, the team is hosting two upcoming events:

Flow with Purpose: Saturday June 6, 9 to 10 a.m. Ohana School for Performing Arts (Chicopee). Donation-based yoga class (suggested donation \$30 per participant)

(413) PMC Night: Thursday June 11, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. McCarthy’s Pub (Belchertown) 10% of all food sales on this day as well as proceeds from a 50/50 raffle will be donated directly to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute through Team (413) PMC’s fundraiser.

Team (413) PMC welcomes other businesses to support its efforts. To sponsor or make a contribution to Team (413) PMC, donate online here, email sarahdaasheim@gmail.com or call (413) 687-1698. Any gift, large or small, makes a difference, and every rider-raised dollar is directly donated to DFCI and the Jimmy Fund.

BHS seniors receive biliteracy awards

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Public School District is proud to announce that seven seniors from Belchertown High School will earn the prestigious Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Seal of Biliteracy. The Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy honors graduating students who have achieved high function-

al and academic levels of language proficiency in both English and a world language. The Seal of Biliteracy is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for colleges and will appear on student transcripts. Our area community colleges and state universities give from 9-15 college credits to students who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy. Congratulations.

2026 Recipients of the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish: Abigail Almeida, Tyler Benedetti, Mackenzie Burch, Edan Chaverri, Jiovanka Rosa-Cortez, Kiera Struzziero

2026 Recipient of the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction in Spanish: Lucas Bermudez



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Planning Board Chair James Trompke pushed back, warning the Selectboard not to undermine his board’s authority on site plan approval.

“It seems like it’s a little bit of a disrespect, saying that you’re only going to approve it at 15 based on your perspective, rather than planning board’s perspective,” he said, adding that the move could “open you up to appeal.”

Town consultant Bernard Lynch aligned with the Planning Board on jurisdiction, saying he had “no problem with the 20 cars that the planning board approved” and noting that board’s role as “the authorizing authority on this.”

Co-owner Brett Merrill told the board the business would ramp up slowly, not immediately filling all the spaces.

He suggested they would “test the water with five cars” and self-limit to avoid operational problems.

“We would never do anything that’s going to make

our lives more miserable,” he said.

O’Grady reiterated public safety concerns, including late-night tow drop-offs and drivers “jamming on their brakes” to look at vehicles out front.

Selectboard member Jeffrey Lawson ultimately argued against trimming the Planning Board’s number.

“I would hate to see the board decide to limit, take 25% of your business away from you right off the bat,” he said.

After clarifying the site plan and lot lines, the board approved the Class II license as recommended by the Planning Board—up to 20 used cars—while making clear they will monitor for overcrowding and safety issues.

The license runs through the end of the calendar year.

Trash contract: carts coming, blue bags going away

Earlier in the meeting, Lynch reported that a contract from USA Municipal Collection had been reviewed by him and Town Counsel

and found to be consistent with the proposal the board previously endorsed.

The board voted to enter into the contract with USA, setting up a July 1 start date with new carts and a shift away from the town’s long-standing blue-bag system.

A USA representative said carts are scheduled to begin deployment around June 15, with 96-gallon single-stream recycling carts and roughly 65-gallon trash carts for each household.

Labonte emphasized there will be no more blue bags and weekly recycling pickup.

“You’ll have a 96 gallon for recycling... and for the trash is a 65 gallon, I believe,” he said, describing recycling as “single stream,” meaning “your glass, plastic, and cardboard all goes in there.”

Animal control: chronic loose dogs headed to hearing, court

The board also heard from the animal control officer about a long-running case involving loose dogs and peacocks repeatedly wan-

dering off a property despite warnings and citations.

The ACO said she has received approximately 20 complaints, issued multiple verbal and written warnings and written at least 13 paid and unpaid citations, most at the higher \$50 level.

Despite the escalating enforcement, she said, “there really hasn’t been any effort to do anything” to prevent the animals from roaming, and some recent tickets remain unpaid.

O’Grady said the unpaid tickets will now be treated as bylaw violations and taken to court.

The board agreed to put the matter on the next Selectboard agenda and to summon the owners for a formal hearing.

Town meeting prep, easement, hiring and Open Meeting Law response

Other actions included:

Council on Aging director: The board approved reposting the Council on Aging director job to replace the outgoing director effective July 1.

National Grid easement: The board approved a grant of easement to National Grid so the utility can bring electric service to the West Street building (former West Street School).

Town meeting logistics:

Town Moderator Lynne Mercier walked the board through Articles 21 through 32, assigning who will move each motion and confirming language to be provided to voters.

Town meeting explainer: The board voted to approve the Communications Committee’s plain-language “town meeting explainer” for posting on the town website and social media.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Belchertown Police Logs

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of May 15, through May 28. The information was provided by a member of the police department based on the review of the detailed log summary. This feature is designed to provide context and explanation to some of the calls police respond to every day.

ARRESTS/SUMMONS Monday, May 18

10:54 a.m. – A 55-year-old Belchertown woman was issued a summons on charges of assault and battery. An officer responded to a Federal Street business about a disturbance. The officer received a report the person was intoxicated and drove from the business going north on Daniel Shay's Highway. The person was unsteady and almost fell. An employee told the person they couldn't make any purchases, and they shouldn't leave or drive. The person then grabbed the employee's neck to get their keys back. The person was charged accordingly.

Tuesday, May 19

12:42 p.m. – A section 35 warrant was issued for a 55-year-old Belchertown resident.

Monday, May 25

3:08 p.m. – A 36-year-old Ware resident was issued a summons on charges of two counts of shoplifting and two counts of trespassing. An officer responded to a George Hannum Road business for a report of shoplifting. They wanted to report two incidents of shoplifting involving the same person who stole energy drinks. The employees were able to get a plate of the vehicle. The person was identified and during the investigation, officers found the person was previously trespassed from the property. They were charged accordingly.

3:55 p.m. – A 27-year-old Springfield male was issued a summons for charges of speeding and operating with a suspended license. An officer working a traffic enforcement grant detail saw a vehicle speeding on Boardman Road. The officer stopped the vehicle and identified the operator. Their license came back as suspended and no one else in the vehicle had a license. A relative was contacted to drive the vehicle and the person was charged accordingly.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS Friday, May 15

8:47 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on State Street. Two vehicles were traveling east on State Street in a school zone when the second vehicle passed the first vehicle. The first vehicle was going 25 mph in a school zone. The second vehicle side swiped the first vehicle in a no passing zone. The driver of the second vehicle had video footage of the first vehicle sideswiping them. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

9:53 a.m. – An officer took a report of stolen property from a Springfield Road resident. Buckets with irises were stolen from the residence. The person said they were transplanting them at the time of the incident. The matter was documented.

8:58 p.m. – An officer responded to a State Street residence for a report of a past breaking and entering incident. The residence was two apartments. A windowpane near the door was removed and found on the floor. It was forcibly removed. Nothing was missing from the residence. The incident was documented.

Saturday, May 16

8:36 p.m. – A resident called to report a stolen iPad. They were dropped off at a location and noticed they forgot their iPad in the back of an Uber. The driver said they wouldn't return the person the iPad unless they paid for it to be returned to the location. The person was able to get the registration plate from the vehicle, and an officer ran

the driver's information. The officer tried to contact the Uber driver multiple times. Then on May 19, the officer spoke with the person who reported the Uber was in Rhode Island and Providence Police located the iPad and took possession of the iPad.

Sunday, May 17

10:05 p.m. – An officer dispatched to North Main Street for a report of a disturbance between neighbors and water was dumped on patio furniture. The resident above the other resident dumped water on them and their deck furniture. They were advised how to obtain a harassment order.

Monday, May 18

4:23 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on South Liberty Street. A vehicle going south on South Street was struck by a second vehicle that went through a stop sign on South Liberty Street. The operator of the second vehicle said they didn't see the stop sign. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

10 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on George Hannum Road. A vehicle traveling west on George Hannum Road drifted on the roadway and struck a pole. There were no tows needed and no injuries were reported.

Wednesday, May 20

8:50 a.m. – An officer went to court to get a section 35 warrant. It was granted.

7:37 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on North Main Street. A vehicle going south on North Main Street when a second vehicle pulled into the roadway and struck the first. One person was transported to the hospital and both vehicles were towed.

Thursday, May 21

10:29 a.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire paramedics.

1:47 p.m. – An officer took a report of a medical call and arrived with Belchertown Fire. While there, two people showed up who were no longer wanted there. They were

trespassed from the property.

2:46 p.m. – An officer took a report of a relative who was missing. They were last seen in New York. It was determined the person did not meet the criteria for a missing.

Friday, May 22

2:12 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Greene Ave. A vehicle going north on Greene Ave went off the roadway and struck a utility pole. The driver said a mirror in the back of the vehicle struck them in the back of the head and while they were moving the mirror back, they lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle was towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

Saturday, May 23

9:21 p.m. – An officer responded to a Jabish Street residence for a report of a juvenile who was threatened. The matter was documented and they were advised how to obtain a harassment order.

Sunday, May 24

9:31 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Daniel Shay's Highway. A vehicle went off the roadway striking a road sign, street sign and a post. The operator said they were unsure why, but lost control of the vehicle. The person was transported to the hospital and the vehicle was towed.

2:43 p.m. – An officer took a report of a larceny at a Federal Street storage container. The storage container was cut open and entered sometime overnight. The door was opened and they had padlocks on them. The matter is under investigation.

8:26 p.m. – An officer dispatched to Old Bay Road for a fire alarm activation. It was determined the alarm was maliciously pulled by a juvenile. A section 12 form was completed, and they were transported to the hospital. The School Resource Officer was contacted.

Monday, May 25

1:23 p.m. – An officer was contacted by a hospital for a report of a person who was assaulted while in Belchertown. The officer

went to the hospital to speak with the person. They went to town to visit someone. They walked on North Main Street to Sargent Street and while there near Chadbourn, they alleged they were jumped by a person. It was alleged someone pulled a knife out. They had a minor laceration. They needed stitches and photos were taken. The matter is under investigation.

Tuesday, May 26

2:16 p.m. – An officer and Belchertown Fire paramedics regarding a person who took too much medication.

10:39 p.m. – An officer was driving on patrol past the sports field on State Street saw a mobile toilet on its side. No damage was done. There was a message left for the recreation department.

Wednesday, May 27

6:57 a.m. – An officer responded to a Federal Street business reported a battery stolen from equipment sometime overnight.

8:46 a.m. – An officer and School Resource Officer conducted a well-being check a juvenile reported an argument with their parents.

3:35 p.m. – A vehicle traveling west on Ware Road when the vehicle veered off the road, struck mailboxes and a private road sign. The vehicle came to a stop in a driveway. The vehicle was able to be driven from the scene and no injuries were reported.

7:42 p.m. – Officers and Belchertown Fire responded to Daniel Shay's Highway for a report of a vehicle on fire. The vehicle was fully involved when the officers arrived on scene. They spoke with the operator who was identified and said they were going north on Daniel Shay's Highway when the vehicle began acting abnormally.

They saw smoke from the vehicle, exited the vehicle and called 911 for assistance. No medical assistance was needed, and a tow company was contacted to remove the vehicle.

9:53 p.m. – An officer went to a residence at the request of Northampton Police to locate a person and

place them into custody for a violation of an abuse prevention order. They transferred the custody of the person over to Northampton Police.

Thursday, May 28

8:19 a.m. – An officer received old ammunition from a resident. It was placed into property for destruction.

1:11 p.m. – A resident came to station to report an incident of fraud. They had an account opened in another state under their name.

Granby Police Logs

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 128 calls for the week May 22, through May 28. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, May 22

2:10 p.m. – Officers investigated a single car motor vehicle accident on West State Street. No injuries were reported.

Sunday, May 24

6:18 a.m. – Officers investigated theft from a new construction jobsite. The incident is under investigation.

Monday, May 25

3:25 a.m. – Officers assisted the Granby Fire Department with structure fire on South Street. The incident is under investigation.

2:26 p.m. – Officers investigated a two-car motor vehicle accident with airbag deployment on Amherst Road. Minor injuries were reported.

Tuesday, May 26

12:34 p.m. – Officers investigated a two-car motor vehicle accident on Carver Street. No injuries were reported.

Wednesday, May 27

6:32 p.m. – Officers investigated a neighbor dispute.

Holyoke Arts League to be featured at Wistariahurst

HOLYOKE – During the month of June, the Wistariahurst Museum at 238 Cabot St. in Holyoke will host an exhibition of artwork by members of the Holyoke Arts League (HAL). The museum and gardens are the historic home of the Skinner Family that owned and operated the Skinner Silk Mill, the world's premier silk fabric production facility in the city's Canal District.

Throughout the month of June, the exhibition may be viewed free of charge during the museum's open hours, Mondays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Tuesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

This juried show will include entries in oil and pastel, watercolor, acrylic, tempera, gouache and other non-oil wet media, graphite, charcoal, printmaking and other graphic media, sculpture and

ceramics.

Light refreshments will be served.

The arts league was founded in 1923 and is now celebrating its 102nd year in Holyoke. The League holds artist demonstrations and weekly adult figure drawing sessions. For more information about HAL, visit <https://www.holyoke-arts-league.org> online. You may also address inquiries to holyokeartsleague@gmail.com

holyokeartsleague@gmail.com

For more information about Wistariahurst, call (413) 322-5660 or online at info@wistariahurst.org. You may direct inquiries about Wistariahurst by emailing munselle@holyoke.org. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass. Cultural Council, a state agency.

Crafters wanted for St. Nicholas fair, raffle

LUDLOW—Crafters Wanted for the Rosary Sodality's St. Nicholas Craft Fair and Raffle on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at Christ the King Church located at 41 Warsaw Avenue in Ludlow from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The cost is a non-refund-

able \$40. fee for an 8-ft table, which will be provided by the church.

To reserve a table or for more information contact Debbie Martell at 413-547-8739 or Lorraine Bernier at 413-519-7658.

Light refreshments will be available.



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Sponsors sought for car show event

BELCHERTOWN – In an effort to defray the costs (trophies, permits, entertainment, flyer printing, and distribution, etc.), the Belchertown Lions Club is appealing to our local businesses to have an 18" x 24" weather-resistant sign with ground stake custom-printed and prominently displayed on the Town Common during the event on Aug. 8. We will handle the set-up design and printing for a donation of \$100. All proceeds from this year's car show will stay locally as we support our Senior Center, Fuel Assistance Programs, Veterans' Organizations, Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Relay For Life, Aaron's Day, local Food Pantries, Belchertown Little League, College and Continuing Ed. Scholarships for seniors at BHS and Pathfinder, as well as emergency requests regarding sight and hearing concerns.



Alternately, or in addition to the sponsor sign, businesses can opt to submit an item or gift certificate in any amount to be displayed for a Pick-A-Prize raffle -- where attendees can purchase a sheet of 25 tickets...and place as many of their tickets into whichever gift bags they desire.

If you are the owner or representative of a local business and would like to sponsor a ground sign, kindly email Lion Mike Mathras at

mmathras@charter.net, and you will promptly receive the necessary information to do so.

If you would like to donate a gift certificate or prize for our raffle table, please get in touch with Barb Greene at br123199@charter.net

As you consider your donation, please keep in mind that all profits from the sale of food, raffle tick-

ets, and sponsor signage at this event will go directly to the local charities mentioned above.

Stay tuned for upcoming information regarding the "Cruisin' the Common" Car Show in the Sentinel, by visiting our website at www.belchertownlionsclub.com, or by checking out our Facebook page: Belchertown Lions Club.

The benefits of native plants to the area

BELCHERTOWN – Native plants are essential to maintaining local food webs, with many insects native to North America only being able to consume plants that are also native to North America. Native insect populations have been in sharp decline in recent years, largely due to the removal of native plants, the rise

of various invasive species, and the use of pesticides. These insect populations are necessary food sources for songbirds which rely on them to raise their young. By restoring native plants to our yards, we can help to protect the ecosystems and food webs within our own neighborhoods, ensuring that populations of a vari-

ety of creatures (including humans) remain healthy for many years to come. For more information on the benefits of native plants and how you can help, check out HomegrownNationalPark.org and MassPollinatorNetwork.org. Also, the next time you go shopping for plants, consider looking for a nursery that specializes in native

plants like the Native Plant Trust (Nasami) in Whately.

In addition to planting more native plants in your yard, you can also help maintain local ecosystems by removing invasive species, many of which are able to get out of control because the native predators that

Please see **PLANTS**, page 8

SCHOOL ART

refreshments will be served. Attendees are encouraged to share photos and stories at the event to reflect on the school's end of service.

The former elementary school is to be acquired by trade school Pathfinder Tech as part of an expansion effort. As the time draws closer to the building's transfer, Duford wondered about the fate of his artwork and hoped the art he provided for the school will remain in the halls.

"If there was a painting left, it'd be nice to leave one," said Duford. "But they're gonna use it as they may, you know? They're going to turn it into what they want. But at least I have pictures, you know?"



Duford customized the art to reflect the former student's interests, which included Disney inspired scenes.



Some art remains on site. One such painting is a Winnie the Pooh mural outside of the cafeteria.



Another art piece showcases the artist's creativity in using the provided space.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'm being released from Incarceration. What are my Social Security options?

Dear Rusty:
In a previous column, you wrote about people who filed for Social Security late in life.

I am currently incarcerated and will be filing for Social Security in the fall of 2029. I will be 74 years old in the first week of January 2029. Unless I read it wrong, could I be eligible to collect the previous six months?

If this is so, how would that work? Would I get that all at once or incrementally? According to the chart we once got in the mail, I should be collecting the maximum amount. I've worked all of my life and never collected Social Security before. Also, my ex-wife remarried and has since passed away. Do I qualify for part of her Social Security?

Signed, "D" in Danbury

Dear "D" in Danbury:
I'm afraid you cannot receive Social Security benefits while you are incarcerated, even if you are eligible for them prior to your release.

Thus, you cannot get retroactive Social Security benefits for any period you were still incarcerated. For clarity, although most who apply at a later age (e.g., in their 70s) do have the option to claim retroactive benefits, you cannot get any SS benefits for any month you were still incarcerated. Further, you will not get credit for delaying your application for SS benefits while you are incarcerated (you won't earn Delayed Retirement Credits during your incarceration).

Assuming (from what you shared) that you expect to be released from incarceration in the fall of 2029, you can apply for your SS benefits to start upon your release. Be aware, however, that it usually takes several months for your application for SS benefits to be processed and you can specify the month you wish your benefits start.

Your benefit amount will be based upon your average monthly earnings for the 35 highest earning years over your lifetime. But you cannot get retroactive SS benefits for time prior to your release from incarceration. Since Social Security does not pay ben-

efits for partial months, you can file for your SS benefits to start effective with the month following the month in which your incarceration ends. Be sure you have your official prison release documentation (parole or discharge papers) in hand when you apply for your Social Security benefits.

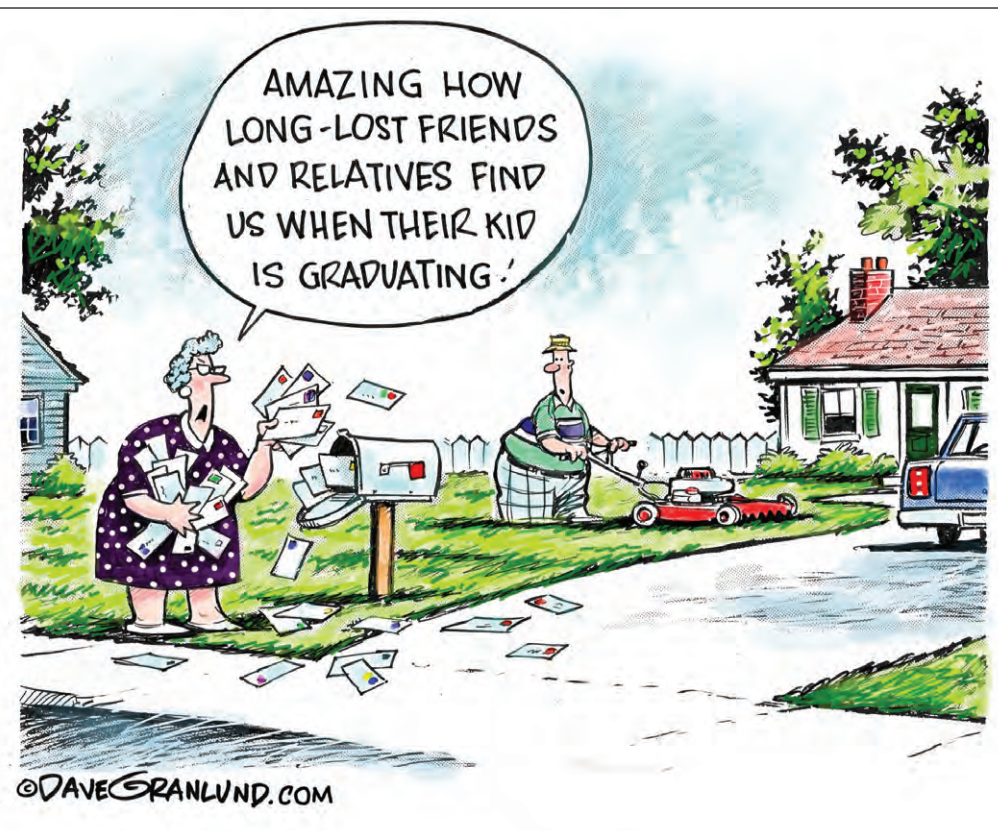
FYI, some correctional facilities have a "Prerelease Agreement" with Social Security, which may enable you to file for your SS benefits three to four months prior to your release from incarceration. Be sure to check with your facility to see if they have such an agreement with Social Security and, if so, use it to apply for your benefits in advance of your release. This will facilitate your SS benefits starting more quickly upon your release.

You did not ask about healthcare coverage, but since you will be eligible for Social Security, you will also be eligible for Medicare upon your release. When you apply for your Social Security benefits, you can also apply for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient medical services), the premium for which will be deducted from your Social Security payment. FYI, Medicare Part A (coverage for inpatient hospitalization services) is free and automatic because you are also eligible for Social Security.

Finally, regarding survivor benefits from your ex-wife, you can only get a surviving ex-spouse benefit if you were married for more than 10 years and your own SS retirement amount is less than your ex-wife was receiving at her death. In other words, you can only get one SS benefit either your own or your deceased ex-wife's amount, whichever is higher.

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 ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

OPINION



A question and an answer?

Carole, who faithfully reads the column in the Wilbraham-Hampden Times each week, wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady:

"I am hoping you can provide me with some advice as to how to rid my garden of an incredibly invasive plant. It is called *Houttuynia cordata* or chameleon plant. I bought a single variegated plant about 25 years ago and now I literally have hundreds of them in my gardens and lawn. The plant is no longer variegated but reverted to green with red around the edges. For at least three or four years, I have been trying to dig them out one by one which has been extremely difficult due to the long roots – some can be over a foot long – which become intertwined with other plants, choking them. I have not been very successful, despite spending hours at a time. And I painstakingly try to get every piece of root out. I am not sure if they are spreading solely through the roots or also from the flower pod seeds.

I notice they also spread under my brick walkway even though they get no sun there. It's been very frustrating. For that reason, I am considering using a herbicide, but am concerned that it might poison nearby plants or may not be effective due to the long roots. Yet, at this point, I am open to the idea. I look forward to any suggestions you may have.

Incidentally, I just learned from the internet that it is considered to be a medicinal herb, which I find quite shocking, given how much I

have come to dislike them! Thank you very much for your time and assistance."

Happy to help, Carole! It's funny you mention that this

with herbicide. To me that sounds like a smart plan to get the chemical right to the roots. Time consuming, but targeted.

I'll be curious to know how you make out trying to rid your landscape of this plant.

Diane, who gardens in West Chesterfield, had a possible solution for my hyacinths getting cut off at the soil line.

"We had a great disappointment this spring when something chopped off most of our cultivated black berries. When I was trying to prune what was left and save something I found the stalks laying on the ground but the tops were eaten. It looked like someone took a clean angle sweep with a hatchet to cut down the stalks. Then one evening at dusk we saw the culprit. It was about a 60 pound porcupine! He was chomping on our wild white rose bushes. He would bite the stalks off but since the rest of the bush wouldn't let the branch fall, he couldn't eat the top. What a mess. When I read your article I was thinking this might be the answer to the mystery."

Hmm, I will have to keep on the look out for a porcupine; you never know.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 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.

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



plant is a medicinal herb.

Some years back I was taking extract of Japanese Knotweed, another invasive plant, in my quest to cure late stage Lyme Disease. I guess most plants have some merit although some times it's hard to want to admit it, especially in the situation you are in.

While I have never grown *Houttuynia cordata*, I have dealt with similar invasive plants. Not always have I been successful, but here are a few tactics you can try.

If there is a way to smother, go for it. Try black plastic, a thick tarp or cardboard covered in mulch.

Eventually, if the plant can't photosynthesize, it will die.

You are smart to try and remove every little bit of root when hand digging it out; it's kind of amazing how a tiny piece will start a whole new plant. For that reason, never take the rototiller to a patch of any invasive plant, especially those that spread by rhizomes. The roots will be dispersed throughout the garden.

I also read about cutting the stems of the plants and then "painting" the open cuts

It is often very close to water, but it can be quite distant away. The nest is a platform of sticks. The male begins construction, then female builds while male brings materials.

Both parents also feed their young by regurgitation. Young begin to climb about near nest by 16-17 days after hatching, usually make first flight at 21-23 days.

They are fed by parents for a few more weeks. Young are reportedly capable of swimming well. These herons have one to two broods per year.

These herons forage mostly by standing still or stalking very slowly at edge of shallow water, waiting for prey to approach. Sometimes they use bait" by dropping a feather or small twig on surface of water to lure fish within striking distance.

They eat mostly small fish, but will also eat crayfish and other crustaceans, aquatic insects, frogs and tadpoles. Other items include grasshoppers, snakes, earthworms, snails and small rodents.

Black and white warbler

My daughter, Paula, saw a black and white warbler by the cross country trail at Quabbin Regional High School last week. As the name implies, the warbler has black and white feathers with black streaking on the breast and white wing bars, white eye line and white belly.

Red shouldered hawk

A Montgomery resident had a red shouldered hawk in her yard. She sent a photo of it in flight.

Whippoorwill

I received an email on May 15 from a Belchertown resident. She stated, "The whippoorwill is back in my yard again this year. The calls starts around dark and continue off and on till sunrise. She or he perches on the roof and calls all night. It can be very annoying as you are trying to sleep, but I still feel blessed or cursed."

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 8

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

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

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in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

The green heron is solitary at most seasons and often somewhat secretive, living around small bodies of water or densely vegetated areas.

When seen in the open, it often flicks its tail nervously and raises and lowers its crest.

The small heron is about 16 to 22 inches long. The green on this bird's back is an iridescent color and often looks dull bluish or simply dark.

They have orange yellow legs, chestnut neck, black crown feathers. Young birds are duller and brown with a striped neck.

Northern birds migrates as far as Panama and northern South American. Green herons in the most southern states do not migrate.

Green herons inhabit coasts and shorelines, forests and



John Kunhardt of Belchertown took this photo of a green heron catching a fish at Lake Wallace.

woodlands, freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers and saltwater wetlands. Their call is a sharp "kyowk" or "skyow."

They nest in a wide variety of situations, including willow thickets, mangroves, dry woods and open marsh. The female lays three to five pale green or blue green eggs. Both the male and female incubate the eggs which takes 19 to 21 days.

The male chooses nesting territory and calls repeatedly from prominent perch in tree or shrub. Displays of male include stretching neck forward and down and snapping bill shut, pointing bill straight upward while swaying back and forth. Male and female may perform display flights around territory. Nest site is usually in shrub or tree 5-30 feet above ground, but sometimes on the ground.

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Kina Roy fires a throw to second.

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RIGHT: Kaiya Cavanaugh makes a catch.



B-Town softball opens state tourney with win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – Last Friday, the 28th-seeded Lady Orioles defeated the 37th-seeded Ursuline Academy Bears, 6-5, in a Division 3 preliminary round home game. It marked the first time that Belchertown had a victory in the state softball tournament.

“This is a historic moment for our softball team,” said third-year Belchertown head coach Mike Lafayette. “When I took over this program, we weren’t a good team. We won a state tournament game for the first time today. It was a well-played game.”

The Lady Orioles had lost three state tournament road games since 2022.

Both Ursuline Academy, which is a private all-girls school in Dedham, and Belchertown entered last Friday’s contest with 11-7 records.

The Lady Orioles’ only senior starter was third baseman Abby Almeida.

“Abby is one of our captains and she always plays the game very hard,” Lafayette said. “She’s going to be playing softball at Bay Path University next year.”

Almeida will become the second Belchertown softball player that Lafayette coached at the varsity level to play college softball.

Julianne Cozine was a freshman on the University of Maine Farmington softball team this past spring.

The other two Lady Orioles seniors are Lyla-Rae Williams and Lorelai Smith.

One of the Lady Orioles four junior starters is Lila Roy, who was the winning pitcher.

The righthander allowed five runs on six hits with eight strikeouts and only two walks.

“We’ve never won a state



Pitcher Lila Roy sends a delivery home.

tournament game before today,” Roy said. “This is also the first time that we’ve hosted a state tournament game since I’ve been playing for the varsity softball team.”

Please see **SOFTBALL**, page 8



Kursten Shade looks to shoot in traffic.



Chicopee’s Sam Breton clears the ball away.



Nadia Cassmajor sends a pass away.

Mutiny battles Hartford to scoreless draw

LUDLOW – On Friday, May 22, the New England Mutiny battled the Hartford Athletic to a scoreless tie. The Mutiny is now 1-1-1 on the season. They previously defeated the Worcester Wanderers and had a defeat against the Hudson Valley Crusaders. More on the Mutiny and their new challenges in next week’s edition.



Kendall Bodak, of Monson, sends a free kick away.



Se-Hanna Mars fights for the ball.



Kayleigh Lukasik sends a pass away.

Mustangs close out regular season with win

CHICOPEE – Last Tuesday evening, the Chicopee Comprehensive High School boys lacrosse team, which co-ops with Chicopee High, was defeated in its regular season finale by Monson High School 8-3. Monson, which now co-ops with Pathfinder, is set to enter the state tournament this year. The Mustangs went 10-6 and are well above .500 for the season. Monson, which was set to learn its fate in the state tournament earlier this week, had a nonplayoff rematch scheduled against Comp on Memorial Day.



Noah Latulippe runs along the sideline.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
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Dom Menard receives a pass.



Landon Couture is pressured.

Brady Ronaldson looks for an opening to pass.



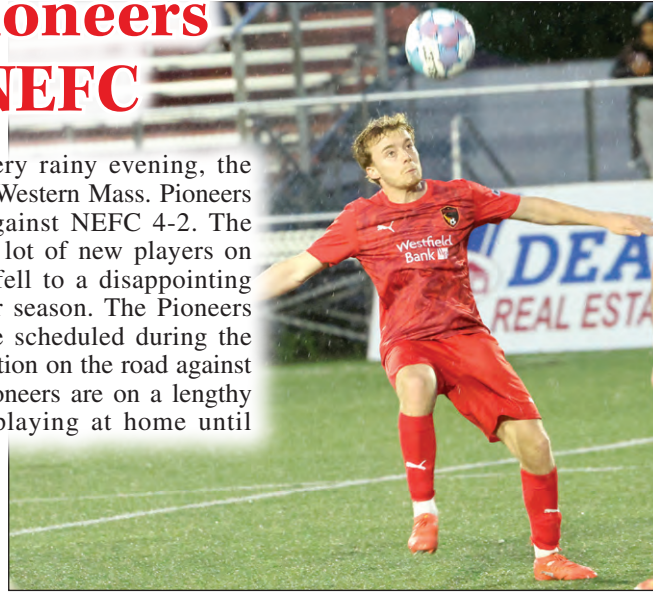
SPORTS

WMass Pioneers fall to NEFC



Thomas Wadas, of Ludlow, eyes a teammate up the field.

LUDLOW – On a very rainy evening, the turf was not kind to the Western Mass. Pioneers as they fell at home against NEFC 4-2. The Pioneers, which have a lot of new players on the roster this season, fell to a disappointing 1-2 on the short regular season. The Pioneers had another home game scheduled during the weekend, and were in action on the road against Black Rock FC. The Pioneers are on a lengthy road trip and are not playing at home until Friday, June 19.



Pearse O'Brien seeks to settle the ball.



Jaiden Williams makes his way up the field.



BEN ALEXANDER GETS READY TO CLEAR THE BALL.



Michael Gouvin sends a pass away.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

SOFTBALL from page 7

Her younger sister, Kina, who's a sophomore, is the Lady Orioles starting catcher.

The Bears took a 2-0 lead in their first at-bats of the game.

Junior left fielder Celia Mitchell was hit-by-a-pitch leading off the top of the first inning before crossing the plate on a wild pitch. Eighth grade first baseman Angelina Cobb singled home the other run.

Sophia Mitus, a junior second baseman, walked with one out in the home half of the opening frame against sophomore right-hander Emersyn Smart. After Mitus stole second base, Lila Roy hit a flair which was misplayed by the second baseman for an error putting runners at the corners. Then Mitus crossed the plate on the back end of a double steal play, which sliced the deficit in half.

An RBI single to center by sophomore leftfielder Madeline Williams tied the score with no-outs in the bottom of the second. After the next batter struck out, junior shortstop Emily Waller drove home two more runs with a ground ball single that snuck past the second baseman into right field.

The Lady Orioles couldn't hang onto the 4-2 lead for very long, as Ursuline Academy tied the score in the third inning.

Junior centerfielder Meghan Ganley drew a leadoff walk before Smart launched a towering home run over the centerfield fence.

The Lady Orioles responded with a leadoff single to

center by Kina Roy. After stealing second base, Roy scored the go-head run when Almeida hit a ground ball that the shortstop misplayed for an error.

With one-out in the top of the sixth inning, Mitus made an outstanding diving catch on a pop-up in shallow right field.

"The diving catch was our defensive play of the year," Lafayette said. "Sophia wants to play college softball



EMILY WALLER FIELDS A GROUNDER TO SHORT.

in a couple of years."

Belchertown junior first baseman Kaiya Cavanaugh grounded a double down the left field line leading



Sophia Mitus makes a throw to first.

The Bears scored one run in the top of the seventh on a sacrifice fly by Smart. Roy then retired the next batter on a groundball to Mitus, which sealed the Lady Orioles' history making victory.

"It was just an amazing day, and this is my favorite team ever," said Kina Roy, who split the starting pitching duties with Madeline Williams this spring. "We're now going to get on a bus in a couple of days and play another game in the state tournament."

off the bottom of the sixth. After stealing third base, Cavanaugh scored on a throwing error by the catcher. It turned out to be a huge insurance run.

Jarvis, Beecher top guns at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, N.H.

– Joey Jarvis survived a slugfest to win his first Modified feature of the summer on May 23 at Monadnock Speedway. The second generation Vermont pilot accomplished the feat by sitting in the best seat in the house, the pole, from where he was immune to the wildness behind him.

Jarvis was one of five first time 2026 winners on the high banks of the fast quarter mile Saturday. Justin Beecher, in house for the night's special R&R Open Street Stock show, duplicated his victory of the same event a summer ago, and reigning speedway Mini Stock champ John Fultz - in his first run of the summer - picked up where he left off last September.

In the Pure Stocks, red hot rookie Josh Brigham scored the first win of his career. New England Dwarf Car pilot Ryan Carman scored his first career victory on the high banks, and then there was 11-year-old Dylan Stati.

Stati, a quiet fifth grade student at the Old Mill Pond School in his hometown of Palmer, Mass. on weekdays, puts on his super hero personality every Saturday, when he dominates the speedway's Young Guns division. On this Saturday, he cruised to victory for the fourth time of his rookie campaign.

Jarvis and open-wheel rookie Kyle Kenny sat up front as Saturday night's Allstates Materials Group 604 Modified main event went green. They would run in that order until Ben Byrne blasted into second on lap four, with Nate Wenzel close behind.

Wenzel took third on lap 11 and with the two veterans battling for second, Jarvis was able to open some breathing room at the front. That, though, went out the window when a lap-21 caution brought Byrne back to his side.

Jarvis was again up to the task, holding a perfect line for all 40 laps to score his second career victory on the high banks. And he may not have had the fastest car.

A grinding lap-25 multi-Mod dance out of turn four heavily damaged the Patnode and Martin

rides, among others, and brought Nate Wenzel to the front row for the restart. Electrical issues, though, sent Wenzel quickly to the pits, returning now seventh at the green.

Flying back through the field, Wenzel would finish second, three lengths behind the speedy Jarvis. Andrew Brousseau, victorious seven days earlier, gobbled up Tyler Leary in turn three to come home second, Leary was fourth on the night, and Ben Byrne, in the mix all 40, came home fifth.

The R&R Open Street Stock feature saw three dominant Bay State stars again take center stage, Justin Beecher - who makes a habit of swooping onto the high banks to score victories in these specials - took first from Chris Buffone on lap eight and never looked back.

Top hometracker JD Stockwell, representing his Saturday night home well, got up for second on lap 11 and kept Beecher close until exiting in a cloud of smoke 51 circuits later, leaving Buffone to finish second, a third-lap shy of the high flying Beecher, Former speedway regular Adam Gray completed his hard night's work in third.

Jon Fultz strutted his championship stuff in the Keene Towing and Recovery Mini Stocks. Taking the lead from Tim Paquette on lap seven, the 2025 speedway king never looked back as he sped off to his first win of the season.

Paquette held strong to come home second, just ahead of week one winner Kevin Clayton. Tim O'Shea was fourth, and early race leader Craig Chaffee was fifth on the night.

Red hot rookie Josh Brigham left no doubt Saturday that his freshman season will be one to remember in the Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stocks. Coming off a handful of strong early season runs, Brigham started in row three Saturday, took the lead from Colton Hull on lap 17, and sped off into the night to score his first career victory. And, with the win, move to the top of the points parade.

BACKYARD from page 6

Common Ravens

A Brimfield couple had common ravens in their yard last month. They stated in an email, "We mostly hear them and sometimes see them flying over a local feature called West Mountain that is about 1000' elevation and runs north/south about a half a mile east of our house."

They stated, "On a Thursday a raven was in the driveway where I throw a seed mix daily for ground feeders. I saw the bird from inside the garage, my wife saw it with binoculars from

inside the house."

They stated, "We both noticed the larger size, bigger than the American Crows that often feed in the same area. I noticed the wedged shaped tail when it flew away and my wife saw larger, heavier bill and the shaggy throat feathers." A few days later they saw three ravens.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

PLANTS from page 5

keep them under control in their places of origin do not live here. That means that it is up to us to control them ourselves, ideally without using herbicides. For more information on which plants are invasive in Massachusetts and what can be done to control them, see the Mass Audubon's Invasive Plant Guide at massaudubon.org.

The following free Apps are very useful for identifying plants and birds, making it much easier to tell what is native and what is

invasive:

Seek by iNaturalist: This is a phone app that allows you to take pictures of plants, animals, and fungi and will help you to identify them. You can also upload observations which helps give scientists more data to perform research on the distribution and size of plant and animal populations

Merlin Bird ID: This is a phone app that allows you to record bird songs and will help identify which birds you are hearing

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OBITUARIES

Loy Haskard Harris

1936-2026

Loy Haskard Harris, 89, died peacefully at home on May 25, 2026. He was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on July 23, 1936, the firstborn son of the late Loy E. Harris Jr. and Edith (Haskard) Harris, who gave him names from their respective families. He is survived by



Colleen Harris, Loy's beloved wife of 45 years and the mother of his stepdaughter, Karen Harris, Loy's ex-wife and the mother of his children, Sally McClellan, Loy's sister, and her husband Jack, David Harris, Loy's brother, and his wife Christine, Kelly Fanelli, Loy's daughter and her companion, John, Loy James Harris, Loy's son, and his wife Shelley, Elizabeth Bellande, Loy's stepdaughter, and her husband Philippe, seven grandchildren and step-grandchildren and one great-grandchild with another due in July.

Johnny Cash's "I've Been Everywhere" could have been the theme song of Loy's life. His father's profession as an exploration geologist required frequent family relocations. As a result, from the time of Loy's birth until the family settled in Basin, Wyoming, when he was ten years old, Loy had lived in nineteen different towns in eight different states. The family then remained in Basin, but after graduating from Basin High School as valedictorian of his seventeen-member class, Loy resumed his roving ways. First, he went to the University of Wyoming, where he picked up another town, Laramie, along with a Bachelor of Science degree (with honor) in Engineering. He then embarked on a 35-year career with Exxon Corporation and its affiliates. While with Exxon, he lived and/or worked in an additional ten towns and cities in five new states in the US, together with two Native American Reservations. His Exxon career also took him overseas, where he added twelve towns in seven foreign countries (Libya, Venezuela,

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, the Yemen Arab Republic and Colombia). He ended his Exxon career as President and Chief Operating Officer of the company's affiliate in Colombia, where he was responsible for what at the time was the world's largest open-pit export coal mine, complete with its own railroad and port facilities.

In response to a perceived call from God, Loy retired from Exxon and went to Duke Divinity School, adding a new town and state, Durham, North Carolina, to his list. He was graduated from Duke with a Master of Divinity degree (magna cum laude), and subsequently was ordained an Elder in the United Methodist Church. He spent the next six years serving in pastoral ministry at Bethany UMC in Houston, Texas.

He then retired again, and moved with Colleen to Belchertown (another new town and state). He still wasn't finished; while living in Belchertown, he worked as a pastor to small churches in two northern Massachusetts towns.

By the time of his death, he had lived and/or worked in a total of forty-six towns and cities, fifteen states, two Reservations, and seven foreign countries. Along the way, he was named a Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Wyoming and a Member of the University's College of Engineering Hall of Fame.

He died confident and grateful because he trusted that by the grace of God his sins, though many, were forgiven, and the best of life was still to come.

A memorial service for Loy will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2026 at 11:30 am at Grace Episcopal Church, 14 Boltwood Ave., Amherst, MA.

In lieu of flowers, charitable contributions can be made to Grace Episcopal Church, 14 Boltwood Ave., Amherst, MA 01002, Clapp Memorial Library, 19 South Main Street, Belchertown, MA 01007, or to the charity of one's choice.

formal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 06/04/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Probate and Family Court
Docket No. HS26P0307EA
Estate of:
Kenneth Brown Alves
Date of Death: January 05, 2026
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Dorothy E. McKeon of Weatogue, CT.**

Dorothy E. McKeon of Weatogue, CT has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under in-

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by **Brian M Foy of**

Southampton, MA requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

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 06/24/2026. 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

Sandra Ann Hart

1936-2026

Sandra Ann Hart, born Sandra Ann Bell, passed away on April 29, 2026. Sandra, known in her youth as Sandy, was born on November 11, 1936 in Woodbridge, Connecticut to Howard Harold Bell and Hilda King Bell. She is survived by her three children, April Leslie Hart, Stephanie Alexandra Hart, and Matthew Allan Hart and his wife Kate Hart, as well as her five grandchildren, Hannah, Josh and Wayde Hart, and Cole and Simone Nelson.

As a kid, Sandra was a bit of a wild child who enjoyed playing in the woods of Woodbridge and spending time at her parents' diner, the Blue Check. She attended high school in New Haven, CT, where she later met and married Allan Huntley Hart. The two moved to Sydney, Australia, where Sandra worked and supported her husband through veterinary school. After returning to the United States, they had their first child, April, in 1963. Sandra battled cancer,



undergoing experimental chemotherapy in Bethesda, Maryland, and then had two more children, Stephanie in 1968 and Matthew in 1970.

In the years that followed, Sandra learned how to pilot a small airplane, moved with her family to Hawaii for a time, took college courses, studied piano, learned to draw, and was a dedicated mother, engaging her children in enriching activities and making special occasions all the more special by, for example, baking a giant cookie in the shape of a favorite dinosaur. After her divorce, Sandra moved with her children to Shutesbury, Massachusetts, where she worked, parented, and finished her undergraduate degree at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Her cumulative study earned her a degree with three full majors—philosophy, biology and creative writing.

Sandra worked as a reporter, an administrative assistant and a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service, where she served as union steward.

Sandra worked as a reporter, an administrative assistant and a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service, where she served as union steward.

Debra L. Slate

It is with heavy hearts and much sadness that we announce the passing of Debra L. Slate. Beloved Mom, cherished sister-cousin-friend. Deb left this earthly life with family by her side on January 24, 2026 after a hard fought battle. Brought up in Chicopee, she was the daughter of Roland (Buddy) and Lillian (LaPine) Slate. Deb built a life in Belchertown for herself and The Light of Her Life and Best Friend, her son J.C. Deb earned an Associates Degree in Business from STCC and fulfilling a lifelong passion of service to others, worked for over 50 years with special needs mentally challenged clients in a variety of settings.



Deb will be remembered as a loving mother and cherished friend to many, whose heartfelt presence and kindness enriched the lives of those around her. Deb will be greatly missed by her loving son, J.C.-James Snodgrass, Gunner, her faithful dog and Lily, her cat, all with whom she lived along with her sister, Cynthia Ulmer of Port St. Lucie, FL, many cherished cousins and friends, two of whom she called her "daughter", Casey Gamache and her "second son", Greg Ely.

Deb had a very special crafting talent admired by all, creating many beautiful handmade items even doing so from her hospital bed. Deb's happy place

and solace when away from home was spending time at Queen Lake with the "Gal Pals", Robin, Barb and Paula or taking in the sights and sounds at the ocean. Those who knew Deb recognized what an amazing woman she was. A quiet presence yet a staunch advocate for all the special people that brought so much joy to her life including a huge love of animals.

Rest in peace now our dear friend. We love you!

A memorial service will be held on June 13 at 9 a.m. at the Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home with burial to follow in South Cemetery. In lieu of flowers and fulfilling Deb's love for animals, donations can be made to the Belchertown Police Department K-9 Unit, 70 State St., PO Box 901, Belchertown, MA 01007

She battled two more cancers before her retirement in the 1990s, after which she started a dog walking business. This last part of her working life afforded her the opportunity to lovingly care for many dogs, cats, chickens and turkeys, and to develop relationships with their owners, which she very much valued.

Sandra was deeply concerned about the environment, and was a staunch supporter of the women's rights movement and of animal rights. She favored the small flowers and birdsong of New England, and particularly loved the spring, when all of the natural world is erupting in beauty. She kept a garden, at first a neat and orderly one, and later a bountiful, unruly one. She loved nature and wild animals, and she provided shelter and love to many cats and dogs who found their way to her.

Sandra was a loving and thoughtful woman. Her smile when she laughed was a thing of beauty. Sandra passed away in her sleep at the age of 89 in Amherst, Massachusetts. She will be sorely missed.

The family intends to hold a memorial service for Sandra sometime in the coming year.

DEATH NOTICES

Harris, Loy Haskard
Died May 25, 2026
Memorial service
June 13, 2026 at 11:30 a.m.
Grace Episcopal Church,
14 Boltwood Ave., Amherst
Beers & Story Belchertown

Hart, Sandra Ann
Died April 29, 2026
Memorial services will be held at a later date.

Slate, Debra L.
Died Jan. 24, 2026
Memorial services
June 13, 2026 at 9 a.m.
Beers & Story Belchertown

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.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Division
Docket No. HS26P0307EA
Estate of:
Kenneth Brown Alves
Date of Death: January 05, 2026
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Dorothy E. McKeon of Weatogue, CT.**

Dorothy E. McKeon of Weatogue, CT has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under in-

formal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 06/04/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Probate and Family Court
Docket No. HS26P0349EA
Estate of:
Kevin James Foy
Date of Death: 03/11/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by **Brian M Foy of**

Southampton, MA requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

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 06/24/2026. 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. WITNESS, Hon. **Diana S. Velez Harris**, First Justice of this Court. Date: May 21, 2026
Mark S Ames
Register of Probate
06/04/2026

return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. **Diana S. Velez Harris**, First Justice of this Court. Date: May 21, 2026
Mark S Ames
Register of Probate
06/04/2026

LEGAL NOTICE

T-Mobile is proposing the installation of a diesel generator on an existing concrete pad to support existing antennas at 105-ft AGL on an existing 115-ft AGL overall water tank located at 28 Park Street, within the City of Belchertown, within Hampshire County, Massachusetts (Property ID: 243-67). T-Mobile seeks comments from all interested persons on any potential significant impact the proposed action could have on the quality of the

human environment pursuant to 47 C.F.R. Section 1.1307, including potential impacts to historic or cultural resources that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Please submit any written comments within 30 days of this notice's publication regarding the potential effects that the proposed project may have on Historic Properties that are listed or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places to: TEP OpCo, LLC. (Attn: Ryan Malek) 326 Tryon Road, Raleigh, NC 27603 Telephone: (919) 661-6351 Fax: (919) 661-6350
06/04/2026

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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FORAGING

Mugwort leaf has a long history of being used for medicinal and culinary purposes.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Arianna Collins teaches about Queen Anne Lace during the event.

A look at pineapple weed.

AI RULES from page 1

members said the schools will need to adopt their own AI rules, potentially using the town policy as a model. Selectboard member Nicole Miner said she wants to ensure a school-side policy also protects the town. "I just have a little bit of concern that if a mistake happens because of AI or just something inappropriate happens on the school level, can it come back to bite us in the town?" Miner said.

Events calendar policy adopted after surge in postings

The board also unanimously adopted a policy for the town's online community events calendar, which has grown rapidly since it was first proposed in November 2025.

The Communications Manager Kate Nadeau told the board that usage has more than doubled during that period.

"Since I originally met with you back in November, we had 822 events that we've been posted on our community calendar so far," she said. "As of today, we have nearly 2,200 events that have been posted, so it is definitely starting to take off."

She said the new policy should encourage more consistent submissions from town departments and committees and allow for better organization through filters. Miner pressed for including schools as a distinct category.

Nadeau said schools already submit items and could be formally added after talks with the superintendent.

Board members also urged staff to continue building out analytics to track how residents are finding and using the calendar. Chair Lesa Lessard Pearson asked specifically about monitoring web traffic.

"It's more about data analytics...collecting data on, how many clicks you're getting or is that something that we could do to see if more people are coming to the page," she said.

Nadeau replied that the town's current tools are "very primitive" and that more robust tracking may require a future investment.

Awards program extended, with eye toward fair-time celebration

The board spent considerable time rethinking how it recognizes employees and volunteers through four annual awards: Employee of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Citizen of the Year and the Whitlock lifetime achievement award.

Members agreed to extend the nomination deadline to Aug. 1, review nominations at their Aug. 3 meeting and vote on honorees Aug. 17, with the goal of tying recognition to the town fair and parade.

Nadeau argued that mak-

ing the event more celebratory could boost participation.

"If you had opted to make the presentation more of a celebration, as opposed to something that is a hand-off, that in the future you're going to be able to garner more people submitting," she said.

Lessard Pearson said she does not want to separate paid staff from unpaid volunteers when it comes to appreciation.

Board members discussed using sashes, banners and parade appearances to spotlight honorees. Selectboard member Jonathan Ritter suggested timing internal recognition so that winners can be featured in the fair parade.

Redevelopment: Parcel D and Carriage Grove

On economic development, the board endorsed a state site readiness grant amendment for the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation's Parcel D, located off Route 21 on the former Belchertown State School property. The funding will advance engineering work to about 90 percent design to make the land easier to market for light industrial and related uses.

EDIC representative Jonathan Spiegel said the goal is to give potential buyers a clearer picture of what can be built.

"This would complete the package and allow for a different kind of marketing," Spiegel said, adding that the plan will show "some 10 to 12 lots as a potential plan, along with the road that goes all the way to the back of the property."

The board also backed a One Stop grant application to demolish four remaining "cruciform" buildings and underground tunnels at Carriage Grove, the former

Belchertown State School campus.

"They really need to come down, whatever happens on the property," Spiegel said. "They're not only an eyesore, but they're dangerous...like the other buildings, they have contaminants in them."

Williams said MassDevelopment has been "very aggressive about trying to find us additional funds" to finish the demolition.

Other votes and acknowledgments

In other business, the board:

Approved the annual dog warrant, authorizing animal control enforcement under state law while noting Belchertown's shelter is operated as a no-kill facility in practice.

Endorsed borrowing documents for generator and SCADA upgrades at the wastewater treatment plant, funded through the sewer enterprise account.

Approved a purchase and sale agreement to sell 6 Berkshire Avenue to buyer Robert Pullewski for \$105,000, with a 10% deposit already in hand.

Ratified one-year appointments for Director of Assessments Zachary Bombard and Director of Inspection Services Paul Esmond for fiscal 2027.

Granted McCarthy's Pub a one-day liquor license and permission to erect a tent for a June 13 fundraiser benefiting an employee facing health issues.

Authorized placement of farmers market signs on the Town Common each Friday before Sunday markets from June through October.

Miner also read from a letter of thanks from the Sunderland Selectboard after Belchertown firefighters responded to an April 11 mutual aid fire.

FORAGING from page 1

fyng flora and partners with local libraries. She also conducts private tours of resident properties where she educates clients on the area's surrounding flora.

"It's just a lovely event for people to get to be more familiar with wild edibles," said Collins. "I've noticed over the years as I've been doing this is that when I was just doing walks, people still felt kind of nervous."

Collins expressed a major barrier she noticed on these walks is people's hesitancy in handling the wild plants. She believes much of the concerns stem around the unfamiliarity residents have with the local ecosystem.

"Well, what can I really do? What can I add these ingredients to," said Collins as she echoed sentiments from previous clients. Frequent questions such as these inspired her to incorporate cooking lessons into her

talks. "That's when I started adding this component of a feast, so that people could try different wild edibles in salads, soups, pesto, desserts and drinks."

The naturals educator stated her love for "bringing people outside" and helping establish a connection with nature. She reflected in the past there were concerns in the area around foraging as a practice due to potential liability issues. She mentioned foraging was an important skill to learn in light of growing concerns around food security.

Collins expressed a wealth of information and pointed out many surprising and common plants around New England as edible. She mentioned dandelions are very versatile, able to be added to salads and brewed as teas. She stated harvesting some edible plants can actually help the environment. She mentioned there are numerous invasive edible plant species which can be used as

common ingredients in the kitchen.

"So, as my friend Blanche Derby says, 'if you can't beat it, eat it,'" said Collins. "Eat as much garlic mustard as you would like. Make all the pesto from garlic mustard that you would like. Use it in place of garlic."

The walk was the first for the Granby library. Collins stated she would be more than interested in running another event depending on community interest and should the library have enough funds to host another interactive seminar.

"I just love sharing this knowledge about that there's free food and medicines all around us," said Collins. "If we just connect with our environment and really have a deeper awareness about who is out there that can provide food and medicine and have a reciprocal relationship with these flora and fungi, it just helps our bodies and our beings."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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59					60				61			
62					63					64		

CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull-god
5. A young canine
8. Cologne
11. Fictional British P.I.
13. Midway between northeast and east
14. A place to shop
15. Minneapolis suburb
16. Single lens reflex
17. NY Mets great
18. Informal loan clubs
20. Habitual twitching
21. Holm oak
22. Willing to consent or submit
25. In an early way
30. Made possible
31. Language in Ghana
32. Relating to one's birth
33. Deep-bodied fishes
38. Defunct European
41. Small American songbird
43. One from L.A.
45. After tenth
47. Hillside
49. Red deer
50. Partner to "oohed"
55. Indian musical pattern
56. Israeli city __ Aviv
57. Golden peas plant
59. Breezed through
60. Midway between east and southeast
61. Frameworks
62. Danish krone
63. Fall back
64. Influential Korean leader

CLUES DOWN

1. Bridge building degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Large, stocky lizard
4. Turkish leader title
5. Nag
6. Blank
7. Closely woven cotton fabric
8. A nice shot in golf
9. Away from wind
10. Evergreen shrub genus
12. Large African antelope
14. Something you receive
19. Satisfy
23. Wet dirt
24. No longer here
25. Writing utensil
26. Ribonucleic acid
27. Consume food
28. Licensed for Wall Street
29. Alternative forms of a gene
34. Buddy
35. We all do it
36. Chicken
37. No seats available
39. Yearned to possess
40. Ineffectual
41. Explosive
42. Turkish title
44. Worn near the foot
45. Impatient
46. Set an example for others
47. Actor Pitt
48. Instrument of torture
51. Swiss river
52. Grayish white
53. A way to print
54. Storied college hoops program
58. Midway between south and southeast

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