

School closure looms

Cold Spring School under review

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN - The Selectboard is preparing to hear a detailed proposal for potentially closing Cold Spring School, with Superintendent Brian Cameron set to present a comprehensive transition plan that could reshape the town's educational landscape.

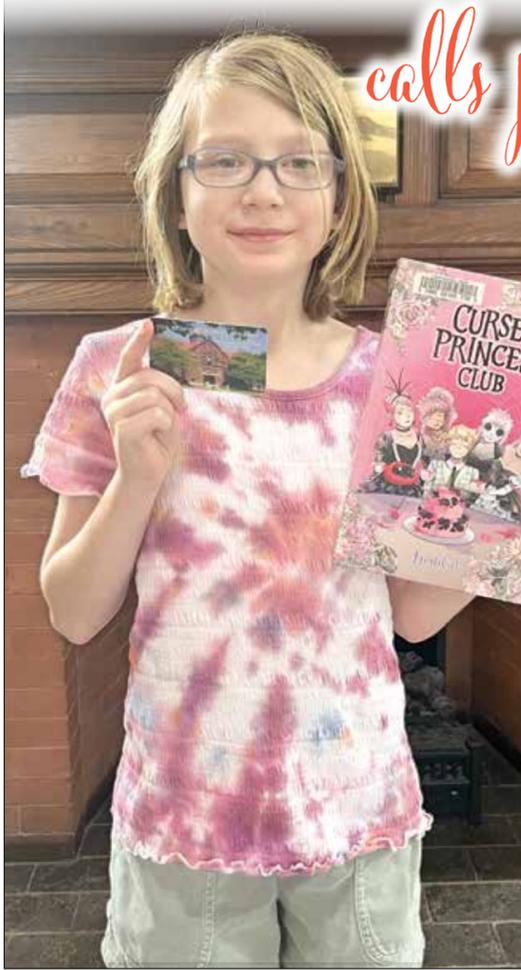
During a recent Selectboard meeting, town officials engaged in a nuanced discussion about the financial and logistical challenges of maintaining the aging school facility. The conversation revealed deep considerations beyond simple cost-cutting.

"They're looking at closing Cold Spring," said Town Manager Steve Williams, highlighting the school's high maintenance expenses. Multiple alternative scenarios were explored and ultimately rejected, including converting the high school to a seven through twelve-grade cam-

Please see **COLD SPRING**, page 5

National Library Card Month

calls people to the library



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Gwen Griffin, age 9, proudly showing off her library card and new book to read.

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

BELCHERTOWN - September is a month for many new things, and also makes way for people to celebrate and try new things. Whether it's the start of a new school year, or looking to start a new hobby as the colder weather approaches.

The American Library Association created National Library Card Sign-Up Month to happen through September in order to encourage the public, especially children, to sign up for a card as the school year begins.

The National Month began to be celebrated in the late 80s, and has since grown into a beloved month for libraries every year.

"I love the library, and I love reading," said Gwen Griffin, a 9-year-old who says the library is "the best place ever."

While at the Clapp

Memorial Library over the weekend, Gwen excitedly got a new tote bag with the library's logo on it, stating it would "help carrying all her books be a whole lot easier."

Signing up for a library card is easy, and all you have to do is go to the library's front desk, and one of the librarians can help you set one up during their open hours.

"September is the best month of the year to sign up for library cards," said Ruthie Sterling, the Teen Services Librarian.

The library has thousands of resources, from computers to chapter books, to audio books and comic books, there's something for everyone, and can help you get your reading done through the year, completely free.

"I love the free resources available to the entirety of the public," said Charlotte Cassidy.

"I love that I get to be surrounded by books," said Sterling.

Please see **LIBRARY CARD**, page 8

Tri-board confronts health insurance crisis

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN — The Finance Committee, Selectboard, and School Committee met to address a potentially devastating health insurance deficit that threatens to upend the town's fiscal stability.

When you don't have enough in reserves... and you get a few cancer claims, they're going to send you right over the edge."

NICOLE CAMERON,
Selectboard Member

At the heart of the discussion was a staggering deficit is about \$900,000.

"We're here tonight to talk about the financials behind the health insurance deficit," said Town Manager Steve Williams.

The root of the problem traced back to the town's participation in a local insurance trust that had been experiencing severe financial instability. Selectboard member Nicole Miner, provided insight into the trust's situation.

"When you don't have enough in reserves... and you get a few cancer claims, they're going to send you right over the edge," she said.

The financial landscape was further complicated by the trust's ongoing challenges. As one board member noted, the trust was facing potential receivership, with estimates suggesting they would need between \$20 to \$25 million to survive the fiscal year.

School Superintendent Brian Cameron painted a stark picture of the ongoing challenges.

"Last year, we were at an 8.9% increase, and majority of that was health insurance," he said, highlighting the persistent nature of rising healthcare costs.

The boards crafted a multi-faceted solution.

- The final plan included:
- The town's cuts would be about \$70,000
 - \$50,000 from the Finance Committee's reserve fund
 - \$244,349 in savings from the school district
 - Targeted budget cuts across municipal departments

A commitment to repay \$108,342.55 to the stabilization fund over three years.

Please see **CRISIS**, page 2

Electronics recycling raises money for local parish

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

BELCHERTOWN - As fall draws near, people begin to make plans for the future, looking at their schedules and their goals, figuring out their plans and next steps to close out the summer.

For many, like St. Francis of Assisi Parish, it's to look ahead towards the goals of the church, as well as the need for a new building on

the main campus.

Currently, the Parish Center is located in an old building at the center of town across from the Common, and the Parish is looking to take this center, and move it to its main campus.

"There's so much activity in our parish, and there's so much we need to accommodate for our classes and ministries," said Deacon John Murray. "We have so much happening, and so much growing in our parish,

that the extra space is now needed."

The Parish has been working hard to put together fundraisers to bring up the funds needed for the construction of this new building, including the Giant Tag Sale on the Common from two weeks ago.

The Parish works to provide several ministries that they use to reach out to their community, including the

Please see **RECYCLE**, page 8



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS
Jim Wood (left) and Andrew Woods (right) with the truck of electronics ready to be recycled.



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Melanie Donovan and Sarah Maroney at Food Truck Friday.

Cultural Council prepares for a new year of fun

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

BELCHERTOWN - Learning about how to find funds for your new ideas or events can be difficult, but not impossible, as towns are equipped with Cultural Councils that work to make your goals and dreams a reality.

The Belchertown Cultural Council has been operating since the 90s, and has been a constant in the town that helps to bring about all the events we have come to love the most.

"One of the best things

about being on the BCC is helping organize and run our two flagship events: Food Truck Fridays and Winter Light Night," said Chair Melanie Donovan. "I love how each of these events have grown over the last 10 or so years, and how they have become woven into the fabric of our town."

The Belchertown Cultural Council is a town committee that operates as a part of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which has a Local Cultural Council

Please see **CULTURAL COUNCIL**, page 4

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Education Foundation grants support at-home reading enrichment and more

BELCHERTOWN — Continuing the tradition of enriching education for students in Belchertown Public Schools, the Belchertown Education Foundation has awarded four Student Success Grants for the 2025-26 school year. This year's grants total more than \$12,000 and include at-home book kits and a STEM lab for Swift River Elementary School, new skeletal models for science course study, and new appliances and cutting surfaces supporting the life skills curriculum for students in the Transitions Program.

"We're excited by the measurable and tangible impact this year's grants will have on students from first grade to the high school level," says Jennifer Faulkner, Board President and Co-founder of Belchertown Education Foundation. She adds, "We continue to be impressed by the quality of the grant applications we receive, for well-planned, research-based, and innovative ideas enriching education throughout the district. The Foundation is inspired to fundraise throughout the year to support these projects that would otherwise go unfunded."

Faulkner notes that as an independent, not-for-profit organization, the Foundation relies on community philanthropy, including donations from businesses and individuals. "We also rely upon committed board members and are seeking to expand our board. We encourage anyone with an interest to reach out to us on Facebook or at info@BelchertownEducationFoundation.org, so we can share what board membership is all about."

With the newly awarded grants below, the Belchertown Education Foundation has provided more than \$113,000 over eight years. This year's exciting projects are:

At-home Reading Enrichment Book Bags, Swift River

Elementary School
Awarded to Lisa Rainaud, Title I Family and Community Liaison, Swift River Elementary School.

Reading to a child during the critical early years of reading development produces many positive benefits. It can significantly increase vocabulary, improve writing

and critical thinking skills, and can even help children wind down before bedtime. This grant funds books, bags, and other materials to ensure all first-grade students have constant access to books at home throughout the school year. Each week, all 140 first graders may bring home a new book bag containing three books on similar topics. The book kits will be reused every year, providing lasting impact into the future.

Elementary Makerspace for STEM Learning, Swift River Elementary School

Awarded to Magda Harrison, School Principal-Grades 1-3, Swift River Elementary School.

The grant supports the creation of a dedicated makerspace to support hands-on, interdisciplinary STEM learning for students in grades 1-3. The makerspace will be designed as a flexible, student-centered environment where learners can engage in creative activities, encouraging problem-solving, innovation, and collaboration. Equipped with 3D printing, robotics kits, coding devices, building materials, and engineering tools, the maker-

space will be integrated into the regular curriculum and enrichment activities, providing students with opportunities to explore, create, and solve real-world problems.

New Skeletal Models Improve Science Course Study

Maria Scudere, Science Department Chair, grades 11-12, Belchertown High School.

Replacing the high school's 20-year-old skeleton of limited use with new skeletal models, this grant supports nearly 100 students enrolled in Anatomy and Physiology and Human Biology courses annually. The previous single skeleton is being replaced with two new skeletons, as well as models of limbs and a skull, exponentially improving access to individual student time with models to study skeletal structure. The opportunity to engage with realistic models is a unique enrichment experience for students planning further education in medical fields. The new specimens are durable, expected to serve student learning for 20 years or more.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Belchertown Education Foundation at their Golf Tourney.

New Equipment Enhances Cooking Skills and Student Independence

Erika Aponte, Teacher-Transition Specialist and Kyle Knowlton, Special Education Teacher, Belchertown High School.

With the addition of new appliances and prep surfaces, this grant advances the cooking curriculum for students of different abilities for their transition into adulthood. Students in the Transitions Program cook as a class three to five times a week to support life skills for greater independence. This grant provides two hygienic stainless steel tables for food prepa-

ration, a refrigerator and an electric cook top. With these new prep surfaces and fully-functional appliances, students in the Transitions Program will hone skills throughout the year, culminating in the participation of the classroom's version of the TV show Chopped with the opportunity to showcase their cooking skills.

The Belchertown Education Foundation is an independent, non-profit, 501(c)3 organization that depends on donations from the community. Tax-deductible donations can be made at any time at BelchertownEducationFoundation.org.

Celebrate the foundation of America

DAR Promotes Constitution Week: Sept. 17-23 at Belchertown and Granby Libraries

REGION – The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution urges Americans to reflect on the United States Constitution during this month's annual observance in honor of this foundational document of national governance.

The DAR initiated the observance in 1955, when the service organization petitioned the U.S. Congress to dedicate September 17 to 23 of each year to the commemoration of Constitution Week. Congress adopted the resolution, and on August 2, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed it into Public Law #915. The celebration's goals are three-

fold: to encourage the study of the historical events that led to the framing of the Constitution in September 1787; to remind the public that the Constitution is the basis of America's great heritage and the foundation for its way of life; and to emphasize U.S. citizens' responsibility to protect, defend, and preserve the U.S. Constitution.

One time-honored observance is the ringing of bells. During colonial and early days of our country, bells – church bells, firehouse bells, town and city hall bells – were used to call people together, to alert them to some important announcement or event. Bells called the people of Philadelphia together to hear the Declaration of Independence read publicly for the first time on July 4, 1776. Then, again, just over 11 years later, on September 17, bells were used to call

people together for the first public reading of our new Constitution.

The public is welcome to join the Betty Allen Chapter NSDAR Bell Ringing Ceremony

on September 17 at 4 p.m. at the historic Clapp House, located at 148 South Street, Northampton, MA.

Additionally, you will find displays featuring books about the US Constitution, for all ages, at both the Clapp Memorial Library in Belchertown and the Granby Free Public Library in Granby during Constitution Week.

DAR has been the foremost advocate for the awareness, promotion, and celebration of Constitution Week. The annual observance provides innumerable opportunities for educational initiatives and community outreach, two mission areas of crucial importance to the National Society.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) FY 2026 grant application

BELCHERTOWN – The Community Preservation Committee will be accepting applications for grant requests for the 2026 fiscal year.

The applications can be submitted between Wednesday October 1, 2025 through Friday, November 7, 2025. The current application form can be found on

WWW.Belchertowncpc.org.

CPC approved grant requests will be considered for the May 2026 Annual Town Meeting. Approved grant requests will be funded during the 2027 fiscal year.

Any questions on the application process can be sent to Jim Natle at Jnate7007@aol.com.

Support Group meets Tuesdays

LUDLOW—The next 6 week session of St. Elizabeth Parish, Ludlow. This support group will meet for 6 consecutive Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm at the Pastoral Center, Zechariah room. For additional information please call Pat at 531-6997.

CRISIS from page 1

The town proposed cuts including \$19,300 from the police department, \$15,000 from recreation, and \$28,150 from the department of public works, \$15,000 from the fire department, \$14,000 of the lakes expenses and \$2,500 from the library and senior center respectively.

The school district identified savings through strategic reductions in new hires,

unemployment costs and maintenance budgets.

Select Board member Lesa Lessard Pearson captured the collective sentiment when she emphasized the uncertainty of future health insurance costs.

"We don't know what's going to happen next year," she said, highlighting the need for continued vigilance and proactive financial management.

Finance Committee Chair Laurie Shea said, "We

just need to plug that leak, because we want to get through this year with the least amount of impact."

The boards scheduled a special town meeting for Oct. 27 at 6:30 p.m., with a warrant article submission deadline of Sept. 22, to formalize the financial adjustments.

The meeting concluded with all three boards voting unanimously to support the proposed financial strategy.



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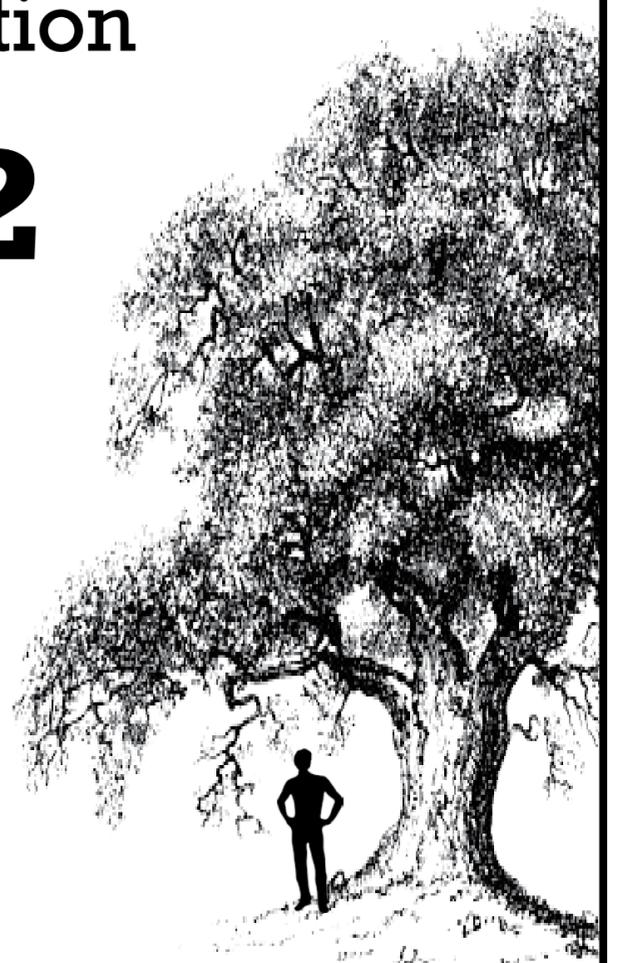
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COMMUNITY

bankESB contributes \$5,000 to Belchertown Senior Center

Donation goes toward purchase of new van

EASTHAMPTON - bankESB proudly announces a \$5,000 contribution to the Belchertown Senior Center to support the purchase of a new van that will provide reliable transportation for local seniors. The new vehicle, which features the bankESB logo, will help ensure older residents have safe, accessible transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and community events.

The donation underscores bankESB's long-standing commitment to strengthening the communities it serves, with a focus on programs that support seniors and enhance quality of life.

"We're honored to support the Belchertown Senior Center and the essential services it provides to our senior neighbors," said Matthew S. Sosik, president and CEO of bankESB. "Transportation is a key part of maintaining independence and staying connected to the community, and we're proud to play a role in making that possible."

The Belchertown Senior Center's new van will replace an aging vehicle, expanding its ability to serve more res-

idents efficiently. The center serves hundreds of seniors annually through its programs, meals, wellness initiatives, and transportation services.

"The Belchertown Senior Center expresses heartfelt gratitude for the generous support we receive," remarked Jessica Langlois, MS, CDP, executive director of the Belchertown Senior Center. "Our partnership with bankESB has greatly enriched our community, and their unwavering commitment to our mission is truly appreciated. The funds donated will be dedicated to acquiring a new van for our transportation program, enhancing our ability to serve those in need. We cannot thank them enough for being a vital part of our efforts."

bankESB, a local community bank with a strong tradition of giving back, continues to invest in initiatives that promote community health, education, and well-being-embodiment the spirit of The Giving Tree as a symbol of its commitment to the communities it serves.

About bankESB

Founded in 1869 as Easthampton Savings Bank, bankESB is headquartered in Easthampton,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Alicia Austin, Linda Zajakowski, Kim Rossi, David Small, Andrea Stadnioki, and Jessica Langlois are giving and accepting the \$5,000 check.

Massachusetts. We have \$1.9 billion in assets and offer a complete line of consumer and business deposit and lending products and services through 11 branches located throughout Western Massachusetts. We're proud to fulfill our community

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charitable giving program, The Giving Tree, bankESB and the Easthampton Savings Bank Charitable Foundation support non-profit organizations and causes throughout Hampden and Hampshire counties. In 2024 alone, The Giving Tree donated near-

ly \$515,000 and over the past decade has donated \$4 million. bankESB is proud to be named a Corporate Citizenship Award winner for the past 11 years by Boston Business Journal and a three-time Top Workplaces Culture Excellence award winner for employee appreciation, well-being, and professional development. For more information, visit bankESB.com.

bankESB is a member of the Hometown Financial Group, a \$6.6 billion multibank mutual holding company headquartered in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and the parent company of the family of banks that includes bankESB, bankHometown, North Shore Bank, and Abington Bank, a division of North Shore Bank, as well as Hometown Mortgage. Hometown Financial and our banks are proud to be recognized nationally as a two-time Top Workplaces USA award winner and a two-time Top Workplaces Financial Services Industry award winner by Energage, a Top Places to Work award winner by The Boston Globe, and a Top Workplaces award winner by the Hartford Courant. For more information, visit bankHFG.com.

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CULTURAL COUNCIL from page 1

granting system that gives money to the CC's across the state to directly fund projects, events, and more right in town.

"Anyone can apply for a grant as long as they meet the state and local criteria, which can be found on our website, www.belchertown.org/bcc," said Donovan.

Donovan has always had a passion for the arts, getting their degree in performing arts, and after moving to Belchertown, was thrilled to see all the events offered by the library, and that the Belchertown Cultural Council existed to help make these events happen.

"It just wouldn't be the same Belchertown without these events," said Donovan. "I wanted to be part of making fun, educational, inclusive events continue to happen in my town"

Countless events have been sponsored by the

Belchertown Cultural Council, and even more have been able to be created as a direct result of the funding provided by the Council and its members.

Recently, the BCC partnered with the Belchertown Community Alliance and Commonwealth Murals to create the graffiti jam at the skate deck, as well as the art show at the Scarboro Garden, and so much more.

"Through helping to host BCC events I've met so many more folks in town than I otherwise would have. I love when community members share their ideas for events and activities," said Donovan. "It really highlights how many creative individuals live in Belchertown and how much they care about building a vibrant community."

The Belchertown Cultural Council has their hands in many organizations, and makes it their goal to ensure that the culture of our towns are celebrated, and shared, with the neighboring communities.

Working also with the Belchertown Community Band is another way the Cultural Council has made a difference, allowing for the community to really share and enjoy the talents within their own neighborhood.

"Belchertown is the community I love because the folks who live here work

hard to enrich it. There are so many folks serving on town committees, running programs at the rec, the library, the senior center, Lake Wallace, volunteering their time and expertise to make things happen," said Donovan.

Donovan works hard with the rest of their partners on the Cultural Council to host events and create ways for people to come together and see their ideas come to life.

"If you follow the Creative Economy online (and you should) they highlight all the events that happen in town each week. There's so much going on in Belchertown, and it's all thanks to the regular, everyday people who put in the effort," said Donovan.

Its not too late, and the Cultural Council is accepting applications now for events, classes, and more and you can email them any time with questions.

"I would encourage anyone with an idea for a project, event, class, etc to apply for a grant. It doesn't need to be a big to-do; most of our grant awards are under \$1,000. Reach out and talk to a BCC member about it. We would be happy to offer feedback or guidance," said Donovan. "There is a virtual grants info session on September 9, which will be recorded and available on the MCCs website."

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COMMUNITY

PMP joined Member Track Network

Organization gives members access to tracks across North America

By Paula Ouimette
pouimette@turley.com

PALMER – Since last December, a group representing various racetracks across North America has been working together to create an incredible opportunity for their members.

The Member Track Network is a not-for-profit organization that connects private club racetracks through a standardized reciprocal member agreement, allowing club members to experience close to a dozen different tracks in the U.S. and Canada.

“So, our members can go to their track, and their members can go to our track,” said Al Sandy, Club Director at Palmer Motorsports Park.

Sandy said Palmer Motorsports Park was developed as a private club for members, and each year, members travel to Indianapolis, Indiana for a conference and tradeshow.

Here, various track owners get together and network, as well as share ideas.

Sandy said every year he introduces himself and proposes a reciprocal member agreement with the other track representatives. At last year’s conference, the owner of The Podium Club in Phoenix, Arizona approached Sandy about forming a not-for-profit network across the U.S. and Canada.

“Being not for profit, at present, my members can go to nine different tracks across the county and Canada and drive for free,” Sandy said.

Sandy said the Member Track Network will help to bring tourism to the communities surrounding Palmer Motorsports Park, and boost the local economy as network members will utilize restaurants, lodging and more while visiting the Whiskey Hill track.

“We’re going to be pulling people in with this,” Sandy said.

Sandy is joined on the Member Track Network board by Jayson Citron of The Podium Club in Phoenix, Arizona and Shawn Hayes of Atlanta Motorsports Park in

Georgia.

Currently, the Member Track Network includes access to the following tracks: Palmer Motorsports Park in Palmer; Rocky Mountain Motorsports in Alberta, Canada; NCM Motorsports Park in Bowling Green, Kentucky; Motorsport Ranch in Cresson, Texas; MSR Houston in Texas; Lime Rock Drivers Club in Connecticut; Atlanta Motorsports Park in Georgia; The Podium Club in Phoenix, Arizona; the Autobahn Country Club in Joliet, Illinois; and Calabogie Motorsports Park in Ontario, Canada.

For more information, visit www.membertracknetwork.com.

“It’s been a lot of fun, but it’s been a lot of work,” Sandy said of the organization’s creation. “I feel satisfied that I helped to form something that I hope will stick around.”

About Palmer Motorsports Park

Palmer Motorsports Park has been rated “One of the top 10 road courses in North America” by Road & Track Magazine. Its unique setting and challenging road course

draws club members and visitors from New England and beyond for racing, research, recreational, and business-related activities.

Palmer Motorsports Park hosts a variety of events, including Porsche on the Mountain on Sunday, Oct. 5 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Porsche on the Mountain features everything Porsche from show cars to track cars, to race cars and project cars. Show car entry is \$35 (pre-registration required) and \$10 general admission.

Proceeds from this event benefit Homes For Our Troops. For more information and to register, visit www.porscheonthemountain.com.

The annual Trunk or Treat Car Show to benefit food pantries in Palmer and Ware will be held on Sunday, Oct. 26 and the popular Mustangs on the Mountain event is also set to take place in October to benefit the Central New England Equine Rescue.

For more information about Palmer Motorsports Park, visit palmermsp.com or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

BCC announces upcoming local grant opportunities

BELCHERTOWN — The Belchertown Cultural Council (BCC) is excited to announce that our annual grant cycle has opened!

We welcome applications from local artists, educators, performers, and community organizations who are working to bring enriching cultural experiences to Belchertown. Grants support

projects in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences that benefit our community.

Belchertown is part of a network of 351 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) in the Commonwealth. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then

allocates funds to each LCC. Based on community input, the BCC determines local priorities to fund. 2026 funding priorities are for public events, nature, science, and environmental education, and programs celebrating local history and cultural diversity.

Key dates for the 2025 grant cycle:
September 2– Applications

open
Sept 9 - virtual info session with Mass Cultural Council

October 16 – Applications due

Prospective applicants are encouraged to explore the program guidelines at <https://belchertown.org/bcc>.

COLD SPRING from page 1
pus or relocating the central office.

“We looked at different options,” School Committee Chair Heidi Gutekenst said. “Closing Jabish and making the high school seven through twelve would require significantly more construction and might prevent future regionalization efforts.”

Cameron is expected to present a bird’s-eye view of the potential transition, though specific operational details will be developed incrementally.

“I have to wait and see what final numbers are for student enrollment,”

Cameron said, indicating a careful, data-driven approach.

The discussion also surfaced ongoing infrastructure concerns at other school facilities.

Jonathan Ritter emphasized critical needs at Jabish Brook School.

“It needs a roof. It needs ventilation things,” said Ritter. “So that’s going to have to be something to fund, to be addressed on maybe a budget standpoint this year.”

The potential closure has broader implications for the community. Board members stressed the importance of transparency and community engagement.

“We want to show the pub-

lic we’re invested along with them,” Ritter said.

The school committee’s principals appear supportive of the potential transition.

“All the principals spoke about the transition plan,” Ritter said. “Mr. Cameron was going to put together a transition plan and open comments up to the public to hear from the parents.”

The Selectboard plans to attend the Sept. 9 school committee meeting en masse, demonstrating their commitment to the decision-making process.

Cameron emphasized that the plan remains fluid.

“It would be premature to tell you this is exactly what’s

going to happen,” he said. “We’re going to have to meet different benchmarks.”

The potential closure represents a significant potential shift in the town’s educational infrastructure, with final decisions pending further discussion and review. The school committee is scheduled to potentially vote on the closure at their upcoming meeting, marking a critical moment in Belchertown’s educational planning.

“We didn’t need a new middle school,” Cameron said. “We heard that. But Jabish Brook is staying open. We need to do some work to Jabish. There’s no way around it.”

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Can I claim my own SS benefit now and get half of my husband's benefit later?

Dear Rusty:

I would like to get an answer concerning taking my Social Security benefit soon and switching to my spouse's benefit when he begins to take his.

I am 64 years, 9 months old and my husband is 65 years, 7 months. My benefit is low due to the fact that I did not work for about 25 years while raising our children. My benefit would be \$573 at age 65. My husband's benefit at age 67 will be \$3,326. My first question is: can I receive half of my husband's benefit once he begins drawing his? Secondly, if I draw my benefit now will that reduce the amount I can draw from his benefit later?

Signed: Uncertain Spouse

Dear Uncertain:

As you may know, the Full Retirement Age for both you and your husband is 67. If either of you claim before your FRA your monthly SS retirement amount will be permanently reduced and, if you are currently working, you will be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much you can earn while collecting early benefits. The earnings limit for early filers is \$23,400 for 2025 (changes yearly and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away some of your benefits (\$1 for every \$2 over the limit). They "take away" by withholding future payments until the penalty is satisfied.

That said, if you claim your personal SS "soon" (e.g., at age 65), you will get about 87% of the amount you would get by waiting until your FRA to claim. You would, indeed, get a "spousal boost" when your husband claims, but you would not get 50% of his age 67 amount. That's because of the way spouse benefits are calculated. When your husband claims, you will get a "spousal boost" added to your early benefit amount (\$573?). The amount of that spou-

sal boost will be computed as ½ of your husband's FRA amount (e.g., \$1663), minus your FRA entitlement (likely about \$661) for a spousal boost of about \$1002. But since you won't have yet reached your FRA when your husband claims, the amount of the spousal boost will also be reduced (to about \$926), which will be added to your age 65 amount of \$573 for a total monthly spousal benefit of about \$1499.

So, the answers to your two questions are:

Because you claimed your Social Security retirement benefit early and won't yet be your Full Retirement Age when your husband claims, you will not get half of your husband's benefit when he claims. You would likely get about 45% of his benefit.

If you take your own SS retirement benefit now, you will get a higher benefit when your husband claims, but the amount you get will be less than half of his FRA entitlement.

The only way you can get the full 50% of your husband's FRA benefit entitlement is to wait until your own full retirement age to claim Social Security.

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.

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



Male Eastern towhee

The male Eastern towhee has a black body, rufous sides,

white belly and long tail with white spots. The female has a brown body. Juveniles are brown with heavy streaking.

They like dense brush, forest edges and overgrown areas; hence, why it is not always seen. This large sparrow, 7 to 8 inches long, forages on the ground, scratching through leaf litter for seeds and insects. In my first sighting of a towhee, the scratching sound alerted me to the its presence.

The towhee is a ground nesting bird that can be attracted to gardens with untamed vegetation. They build an open cup nest hidden under a shrub or in

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 7



LETTER

St. Francis of Assisi thanks golf tourney sponsors!

To the Editor:

THANK YOU to the many businesses that supported our recent golf tournament which was held at Cold Spring Country Club for our Parish Center Building Fund.

We would like to especially thank our Major Sponsors: Window World of Western Massachusetts (Platinum Sponsor), Hulmes Transportation (Gold Sponsor), and Bell & Hudson Insurance (Silver Sponsor), McCarthy's Pub and D.F. Plumbing (Lunch and Dinner Buffet Sponsors)

And finally, our Tee, Green, and Friend

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Thank you to Dave, Head Golf Pro at Cold Spring, and Tara of Tables on the Green for a great job coordinating

golf and food to make the day a very good experience!

Thank you also to the many players who participated in the event and the volunteers from St. Francis who stepped forward to work on this event to make it successful.

So many local and area businesses stepped up to support a cause that is important to many of their customers! We encourage you to also support those businesses that support local causes!

With gratitude,

James Phaneuf,
Tournament Director,
Parishioner
St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Peach pits and preservation

My first experience with growing peaches was back at my parents' house when a peach pit sprouted in their compost pile.

The resulting tree was moved to a spot in the yard and within a few years, my parents became peach preservers. It was fun for them to "work on" the peaches together, and what I mean by this is blanching, peeling and quartering them, then putting the pieces in a container in syrup and freezing them.

Sure, it was a sticky mess of a time but worth it all to have this bounty in the dead of winter.

Fast forward 30 years to the present day and my mini orchard, deemed "the tiny place" when my kids were little. There I have three peach trees, all started from pits. Two trees were from my friend Eva and one I started on my own.

I planted the pits in my garden in the fall maybe 5 years ago. They went through the stratification process over the winter which helped to break dormancy. Gradually they would germinate over the spring and summer months.

Sometimes they need two winters to complete the process and still not all will germinate, I think the last time I had four or five out of a dozen pits pop up. One tree to keep and others to share!

This year's was the best peach harvest I've ever had on these trees. It was probably the combination of the last couple of wet summers

encouraging new growth on the tree and then mild weather this spring during bloom time.

It is always so dis-



appointing

to have the tree so beautifully in flower and then a couple nights of very cold weather come through to kill them all. I still didn't have what I would call a bumper harvest for three trees, but we had enough to can 17 quarts (thanks for the canning lesson, dear friend!) and also eat plenty of the fruit fresh off the tree.

Here are a few fun facts about our favorite fuzzy fruit.

Peach trees prefer soil that is near neutral to alkaline. I never think of liming under the trees, but maybe that would be a good idea.

Flower buds are borne only on shoots that grew the previous year. So it is important to prune your trees to encourage new growth.

Peach trees should be pruned to an open center, so that the sun can ripen the fruit. In our part of the country, prune when the tree is blossom or right after it is

done flowering. At that point in the growing season you can also see and remove winter damaged branches and stems more easily but be careful not to knock off developing fruit by accident.

I read that spreading compost under the tree right after it has been harvested will start the tree out on the right foot. I am going to get to that later this week.

Peach trees are not very long lived. You may get 10-20 years out of them. Trees usually top off at around ten feet tall and wide.

There are such a thing as super dwarf trees, grown as specimens in the shrub border or a kitchen garden, but from what I hear, fruit quality isn't the best. I'll stick to the regular size trees, thank you! And planning ahead with replacement trees means sowing some pits in the garden this fall. Even my mom has sown some around the foundation of her house, just as an experiment. I love that she is still experimenting. I would imagine the memories of "working on" the peaches with my dad hold a special place in her heart.

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

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.

SENTINEL TEAM

EDITORIAL

sentinel@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Lindsey Lukas
LLukas@turley.com



STAFF WRITER
Emily-Rose Pappas
epappas@turley.com



SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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Email it to sentinel@turley.com. Include your hometown and a phone number at which we can reach you for confirmation.

COMMUNITY

Learn to shoot stunning Smartphone photos

BELCHERTOWN – The Quabbin Photo Group invites the public to a program led by award-winning photographer Linda Repasky, “From Meh to Stunning: Smartphone Photography for Nature & Landscapes.”

It will be held on Monday, September 22, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Belchertown Recreation Department, 66 State Street (located behind the Belchertown Police Department). The evening is open to anyone curious about turning everyday phone shots into wall-worthy images.

The program will show how the camera you always have in your pocket can do far more than take snapshots. Attendees will learn practical techniques and in-phone features that make an immediate difference, exposure and focus control, composition tips, burst modes, panoramas, macro close-ups, and simple edits that bring out detail and



A close-up of a ladybug on a leaf, taken by Ed Comeau.

color in outdoor scenes.

Linda Repasky is a Belchertown photographer who captures the beauty of local natural resources with her iPhone. Repasky is a frequent explorer of the Quabbin Reservoir and an avid macro photographer, revealing the tiny patterns, textures, and details in nature that most of us walk past. Her iPhone images

have earned recognition in numerous international photography competitions, and you can view her work on Instagram at @lindarepasky-photography (www.instagram.com/lindarepaskyphotography).

“The camera you always have in your pocket can do far more than take snapshots,” said Repasky. “We’ll cover techniques and tips for using your smartphone to create nature and landscape photos worthy of hanging on your walls.”

Founded by renowned nature photographer Les Campbell, the Quabbin Photo Group celebrates the natural beauty of the Quabbin Region through monthly public programs, guest speakers, and opportunities for photographers of all levels to learn, experiment, and share their work. Whether you’re an experienced photographer, a casual hiker with a phone, or someone who just wants better pictures of New England

foliage, this program is designed to help you get more from the camera you already carry.

If You Go

What: From Meh to Stunning: Smartphone Photography for Nature & Landscapes

Who: Linda Repasky, Belchertown iPhone photographer

When: Monday, September 22, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Where: Quabbin Photo Group, Belchertown Recreation Department, 66 State Street, Belchertown (behind the Belchertown Police Department)

Admission: Open to anyone

For more information about the program, contact Program Chair Ed Comeau at ecomeau@comeauphotography.com. To learn more about the Quabbin Photo Group, reach out to President Mark Lindhult at mlindhult@gmail.com.

Board approves online form for temporary sign requests

BELCHERTOWN – At its meeting on September 2, 2025, the Belchertown Select Board approved the use of a new online form for submitting requests to place temporary signs on town property.

The form, available on the Town’s website, is intended to streamline the request process for residents, businesses, and community organizations seeking permission to display temporary signage. Requests submitted through the form will be reviewed by the Select Board in accordance with town policies and regulations.

The online form can be accessed here: www.belchertown.org/Temp_Sign_Form

In addition to approval from the Select Board, applicants must also receive separate approval from the Town’s Zoning Enforcement Officer and Director of Inspection Services, Paul Adzima. This requirement ensures that all temporary signage complies with local zoning bylaws.

“This new form provides a more efficient and accessible way for the public to submit sign requests,” said Select Board member Jonathan Ritter. “It also helps ensure consistency and clarity in the review process.”

For more information about the temporary sign placement process, please contact the Belchertown Select Board’s Office at (413) 323-0403 or visit www.belchertown.org/Temp_Sign



Access this QR code for more information.

BACKYARD from page 6

dense vegetation. Its song is a “drink your tea” and a sharp “che-wink” call. They are short distance migrant, wintering in the southeastern United States, but some may linger in northern areas.

Other Brimfield birds

The Brimfield resident and his wife saw a Northern flicker probing around plants in their flower bed. Coming to his birdbath are gray catbirds, adults and at least one juvenile, as well as blue jays, who come for a drink. Since he stopped feeding peanuts due to black bears, he has not seen tufted titmice, red-bellied woodpeckers, Northern cardinals or as many blue

jays. Other birds that show up at the bath include chipping sparrow, female or immature; scarlet tanager, female or immature; common yellowthroat warbler; male American goldfinch; American robin and mourning dove.



Common nighthawks

The Brimfield resident said, “I sat out front for three nights recently looking for migrating common night-

hawks, but was skunked, didn’t see any. However two members of the Allen Bird Club reported large flights last week and this weekend. Both live west of the Connecticut River.

Helping birds

A previous column mentioned the poisoning of birds of prey when they eat rodents that ingested anti-coagulant rodenticide bait. Birds can get stuck on glue traps when used outdoors to kill rodents. The birds die or end up horribly injured. The lucky ones are taken to wildlife rehabilitators, who can often save the bird. However, they then need to spend months in care growing back feathers.

South Hadley resident

A South Hadley resident said in an email, “Cedar waxwings sound like delightful birds, I hope I can see one or more some day. I’m in the process of removing non-native and invasive plant species from my property and intend to plant berry bushes, among other things. Maybe that will entice them. Though I do have tons of pokeberry on the perimeters of my yard.”

Eagles, ravens and more

My daughter, Paula, saw a bald eagle circling the Ware River by the Church Street rail trail. It was flying very low so either it was landing or just took off. She also heard a raven calling by the covered bridge and then saw it in a tree. She and her daughters saw an osprey while driving over a bridge in Rhode Island. She also had a Carolina wren on her back deck recently.

Canada geese

Two of my grandchildren and I saw a huge flock of Canada geese in a field in North Brookfield last Friday. I stopped to look at them and my granddaughter, Lizzie, took a photo of the geese.

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



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My name is Lindsey Lukas, and I’m excited to be the new advertising representative for Belchertown, Granby, Amherst, Hadley, and South Hadley. I’m passionate about our community and the people in it.

I grew up in Gilbertville, MA and always wanted to stay close to home and my roots. Over the years I’ve been fortunate to be involved in coaching youth recreational sports in neighboring towns.

Outside of my professional life, I enjoy the outdoors as much as possible and spending time with my family and children, which keeps me grounded and inspired. I am grateful for the opportunity to grow, contribute and connect with the community. I will be out and about to introduce myself over the next few months. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with any advertising needs, even if it’s to say hello!

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Belchertown Police Log

Editor's note: The following are brief explanations of select entries in the Belchertown Police log and arrests for the weeks of Aug. 30 through Sept. 4. 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
Saturday, Aug. 30

5:45 p.m. – A 67-year-old man was placed in protective custody after reports were received that he had fallen multiple times in and out of the roadway. The individual was transported by Amherst Fire Ambulance to the hospital for evaluation.

Wednesday, Sept. 3

10:26 a.m. – Michael D. Santos 45 of 36 Aspen Street, Ware was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license and operating with a suspended registration. An officer was monitoring traffic and ran a

routine check on the registration plate which showed it was suspended. The vehicle was stopped, and the operator was identified. His license was suspended, and he was subsequently placed under arrest, transported to the station for booking and the to the Eastern Hampshire District Court.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS
Saturday, Aug. 30

6:08 p.m. – Officers and Belchertown Fire and paramedics responded to an e-bicycle crash. The operator was intoxicated and had visible injuries. He was later transported by Belchertown Fire Department to the hospital, and the e-bike was taken to the station and entered into property.

11:09 p.m. – Officers were dispatched to a residence to take a report of a missing person. A be on the lookout broadcast was sent to surrounding agencies and a phone ping was initiated. The phone pinged in another town and the police department for that jurisdiction checked the area.

Sunday, Aug. 31

4:40 a.m. – Officers were dispatched to a residence concerning a disagreement.



Peace was restored.

6:35 p.m. – A resident reported that they had received an alert from a credit card company about their credit being reviewed and an application being completed. The resident did not complete an application. The individual froze their account and the incident was documented.

Monday, Sept. 1

1:05 p.m. – Officers assisted Belchertown Fire paramedics.

2:30 p.m. – Officers spoke with an individual who had items in storage. The person went to the location and discovered that several items were missing. The case remains open and under investigation.

3:22 p.m. – Officers and Belchertown Fire responded to a fire in the woods around the former Belchertown State School property. It was

reported that several juveniles had started the fire. Officers located the involved juvenile and Belchertown Fire Department personnel extinguished the fire. The child's parents were notified and picked up the juvenile.

3:53 p.m. – A resident reported that earlier in the day that they thought they were speaking with a credit card company representative. During the call, the resident shared personal information. The resident contacted the credit reporting companies, and a report was completed.

6:56 p.m. – Officers responded to a crash on Old Enfield Road where a vehicle was traveling southbound when a deer jumped in front of the vehicle and was subsequently struck. No injuries were reported, and the vehicle was driven from the scene.

7:39 p.m. – Officers responded to an apartment

complex for a report of harassment between neighbors. There were also allegations made of loud noise that was being created. The information was documented, and the residents were advised about 258E orders.

8:19 p.m. – A call was received concerning a trolling boat motor that was located. The motor was brought to the station and entered into property.

Tuesday, Sept. 2

10:13 a.m. – An officer responded to a parking lot at a bank regarding a vehicle that was backing out of a parking space when the operator did not notice that there was a vehicle behind them. Both vehicles were driven from the scene and there were no injuries.

12:27 p.m. – Officers responded to a two-vehicle crash on State Street. One vehicle was traveling on State Street when the other vehicle entered into traffic striking the other vehicle. Both vehicles were towed from the scene and there were no injuries.

1:27 p.m. – A resident reported that there were firearms missing from her residence. The firearms were entered into the database.

Wednesday, Sept. 3

4:38 p.m. – Officers and BFD personnel responded to a crash involving a bicycle and a motor vehicle on George Hannum Road in the area of the intersection was Dana Hill. The bicyclist was transported to the hospital, and the crash remains under investigation.

Thursday, Sept. 4

10:22 a.m. – An officer responded to a crash that took place in a parking lot of a condominium complex. One vehicle was exiting a parking space when it struck the other vehicle. No injuries were reported.

12:37 p.m. – An officer conducted a motor vehicle stop because a brake light was not functioning on a vehicle. The registration status was expired and non-renewable. The vehicle was towed, and the plates were placed in property.

1:20 p.m. – An officer responded to an Amherst Road residence to take a report of a mailbox that was struck by a vehicle.

6:34 p.m. – An Apple credit card was found and brought to the station. The card was entered in property.



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Charlotte Cassidy and Ruthie Sterling with their library cards, ready to help you get one, too.

LIBRARY CARD from page 1

Whatever the reason to enter the library, a library card truly opens the doors to allow to you take out your next read, movie, or even a game to enjoy.

“Get a library card because the Clapp Memorial Library has so many varieties of books for you to choose from,” said Griffin. “I love most the books because you can imagine you’re in the book

with the characters.”

If you don’t have a card yourself yet, now is the perfect time to get one, and add it in to your collection of resources this National Library Card Sign-Up Month.

So, be like Gwen, and grab a card so that you, too, can disappear into a book whenever you want to, and spend the time you have indoors as the weather gets colder, to read something or learn something new.

RECYCLE from page 1

Take and Eat Ministry, their Food Pantry, and Bible study groups for men, women, and youth. They also have a new ministry, Guardians of the Faith, beginning in October that helps teach you parents to young children how to raise them up in the Catholic tradition.

Local organization Green Day Recycling hosted an electronics and bicycle recycling day, where people were able to bring their old electronics to the back parking lot of the Parish Center.

Jim Wood has been with Green Day Recycling for over 10 years, and has helped orchestrate this fundraiser with the Parish at least a half-a-dozen times.

“We go to different communities and people bring us their unwanted electronics to be recycled,” said Wood. “We believe in bringing more attention to the churches in the community, as well as helping them out.”

Part of the cost of recycling these electronics and bicycles was donated to the Parish, making the fundraiser not only beneficial for the

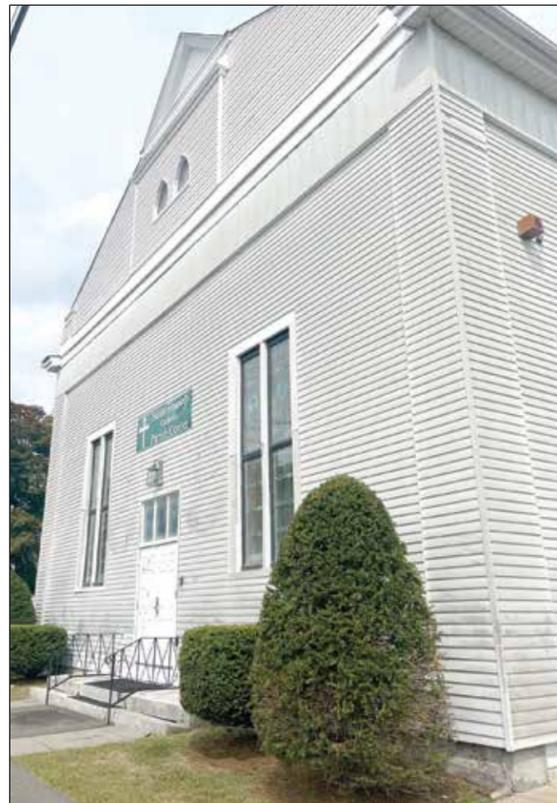
environment, but also beneficial for the church as it seeks assistance to raise funds for this important project for their center.

“It’s really fantastic I get to do this, and I feel good doing it,” said Wood. “We’re doing a good service to the church, and to the environment with recycling at the same time. There is a cost to recycling items, but the people who come out are wonderful and fantastic to work with.”

The Parish is celebrating this year the Jubilee Year of Hope, a tradition from scripture where Catholics will take pilgrimages to Italy to walk and see the sights, and receive blessings from the Pope, Leo XIV.

With a Year of Jubilee upon them, and the generosity from the community, the Parish is eagerly looking forward to making their plans and hopes for the new Parish Center a reality, where people will be able to take religious classes, spend time with one another in a new social center, and have offices all in one place.

“I’m blessed to be here in this parish,” said Murray. “This parish is my family.”



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

The truck is full of electronics to be recycled, and was successful all around.

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Orioles out to 1-1 start



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Timothy Haley fights to steal the ball.



Nathan Mariano fights for possession against Chicopee defender.



Henry Mueller makes the throw-in.



BELCHERTOWN – Last week, Belchertown High School boys soccer opened up the regular season with a pair of games. The Orioles would lose to Chicopee High School 2-1, but rebounded to defeat East Longmeadow 3-0 last Friday night. In the win, Timothy Haley had two goals scored for the Orioles and Luke Dudek had seven saves for the shutout. The Orioles face South Hadley on Sept. 12 at 6 p.m.

Luke Dudek makes a play for the Orioles.



Austin Raymer makes the ball on a loose ball.



Brody Wetnicka looks for a lane to make a throw-in.



Jaleel Roman tries to play the ball high.



Ralph El Aouji is pressured by the Monson defense.



Daniel Brown tries to keep the ball away from an oncoming opponent.



Gianni Holland goes for the loose ball.

Granby bested by Monson

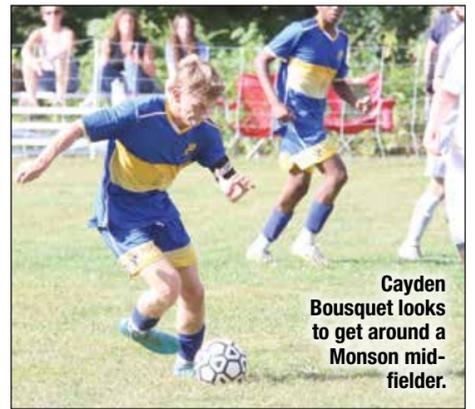
GRANBY – After opening up the season with a tie against Southwick, Granby High School boys soccer was shut out on the road at Monson High School. Daniel Santiago made four saves before leaving the game with an injury. Gage Carter took over and made 18 saves for the Rams. Granby is now 0-1-1.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Anthony Santiago takes the goal kick.

Pioneers wins season opener

PALMER – Last Tuesday afternoon, three different Pioneers scored for Pathfinder in the season opener as they defeated Monson 3-2. Adonis Dupre, Owen Pear, and Cayden Bousquet all had the goals as the Pioneers were able to pull out the victory. The Pioneers fell to Smith Vocational 5-4 to make Pathfinder 1-1 to start the season.



Cayden Bousquet looks to get around a Monson midfielder.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Gabriel Helbok intercepts the ball.



Max Kennedy gets a header in the middle of the field.



James Vulpe defends the ball in front of the net with Cayden Bousquet, left, and Goalie Elijah Hodge flanking him.



Adonis Dupre sends the ball deep.

SPORTS

Leclerc, Patnode gets wins at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, N.H. - Teen Ty Leclerc is for real and so too is a slightly older guy named Todd Patnode. The potent pair split a pair of 35-lap Modified main events Saturday night at Monadnock Speedway, with each backing up his dash to victory lane with a strong third-place performance in the second feature event.

Other winners Saturday on the high banks of the Great Race Place included Super Street hot shoe Zach Zilinski, who won for the second time this summer and Gordon Farnum, Farnum, who jumped into the Swanzy Oil ride mid-season, won for the third week in a row and fourth time this summer.

While points aren't kept in the youth Young Guns division, 2025 will be remembered as the year of Hunter Duquette. The Bay State teen scored his track-high seventh win Saturday. And in the Six Shooters, defending track king Michael Yeaton moved to the top of the leader board with his second win of the summer.

Leclerc started up front alongside Andrew Brousseau as the Allstates Material Group 604 Modifieds went to war in the night's first of two 35-lap features. The Taunton, Mass. star, who'd scored his first career win

just three weeks earlier, jumped all over the opening lead and never looked back.

Top gun Tyler Leary raced most of the way in Leclerc's shadow but could never find a path around the flying teen. Patnode was quickly up to Leary's bumper but could advance no farther, settling for the bronze medal finish and setting his sights on a bigger prize in the nightcap.

With the top eight then inverted to start round number two, top points man Brian Robie, who entered Saturday night's twins with four wins already this summer, took charge on lap two. Patnode, though, firing from row three, led by a foot as the two former champs hit the stripe on lap four and then held strong to beat Robie to the checkers by a single length. Leclerc, blasting off from row four, was strong in third.

While Robie was winless on the night, he and his potent Bar Harbor Bank and Trust ride still holds a commanding 64-point lead in the race to the 2025 604 Modified championship, with only two remaining races this season.

Michael Lashua, stronger and better every week, led the first eight laps of the Twin State Truck Services Super Street feature. Zach

Zilinski, though, wasn't about to let him get away, low-lining into the lead in turn two and then holding off a blockbuster cast to score his second win of the season.

Zilinski had to first hold off Erik Smith, and then JD Stockwell, as the presence of five-time winner Dylan Zullo moved closer and closer from his row four starting spot. Zullo rocketed into second on lap 16 but, on this night, had to settle for second, taking the checkers glued to Zilinski's bumper as he continued his march toward a first-time title. Stockwell finished his strong night's work in third, with two other previous 2025 winners, Chris Riendeau and Smith rounding out the top five.

Reigning Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stock champ Andrea St. Amour started up front in Saturday night's 25-lap feature and immediately took charge. While she had a swarm of top contenders at her heels, the biggest thing to keep her from cruising into victory lane was coming like a heat-seeking missile from way back in row five.

Gobbling up positions from any lane he chose, Farnum took fourth on lap six, third on lap nine, and sailed past points leader

Kyle Kenny two laps later. St. Amour was next. Taking the lead low along the front chute as lap 13 went into the books. He sped off into the sunset to win for the third week in a row. St. Amour and Carlos Grenier, staged a terrific battle for the second spot, with St. Amour prevailing to earn the runnerup hardware. Jimmy Zellman was fourth on the night, and fifth went to Addison Brooks.

Hunter Duquette made easy work of powering to win number seven in the Doug's Auto Body Young Guns Saturday. Leading all the way in the caution-free 15-lapper, he romped to victory after earlier winning his heat. Ella Grabowski impressed in second, and Maya Bell was third.

Michael Yeaton and Travis Hollins were tied atop the Six Shooter leader board entering Saturday's third outing of the season. Not anymore. Like he'd done a few weeks ago at Claremont, Yeaton, the reigning king of the Six Shooters on the high banks, blasted off to win by a country mile Saturday. Hollins was second, and first-timer Jeff Staiti came home third.

T-Birds support charity ride

SPRINGFIELD - The Springfield Thunderbirds announced today their continued support of the annual Ride to Remember, contributing a donation of \$2,500, hundreds of team hats for participants, and a specially designed custom Thunderbirds jersey honoring Aaron Pelletier, Connecticut State Police Trooper First Class, whose memory will be honored at this year's event. The Ride to Remember took place on Sept. 6, bringing together riders from across the region to honor and remember fallen police officers and firefighters.



ilies, participants, and first responders who give this tradition its heart and meaning."

Now in its 14th year, the Ride to

Remember unites hundreds of cyclists as they ride from Springfield to Hartford. Proceeds from the event support the families of fallen officers and firefighters and ensure their legacy is carried forward.

The Thunderbirds' contribution is part of the team's longstanding commitment to community impact. Alongside their donation and custom jersey, the Thunderbirds will continue to engage in initiatives that support local organizations and causes that strengthen Western Massachusetts.

Community members are encouraged to come out tomorrow to cheer on the riders and learn more about the Ride to Remember here, and to follow the Thunderbirds' community initiatives at www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com.

Open roster spots remain in Quabbin Fall League

SOUTH HADLEY - After successful recruiting, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League has reached a decision to expand this year's fall league to six teams.

With the expansion, there are still some open roster spots for players who are age 28 and older. The league was set to get underway with its Sunday schedule beginning on Sunday, Sept. 7. But games were postponed due to rain. The season will now begin on Sunday, Sept. 14.

All players in the league will get to experience an eight-game slate with the cost in the range of \$45 to \$60 depending on the number of players on the team. The cost reflects paying for insurance, umpires, baseballs, and fields.

Primary fields being used this fall include Mittineague in West Springfield and Beachgrounds Park in South Hadley, with a third field being finalized this week.

Players potentially inter-

ested in participating in the league this year, don't wait to sign-up.

Go to www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org and click on the registration page. If you have more questions, you can contact the league's co-coordinators at gscibelli22@yahoo.com or ikhandfield@gmail.com

The Quabbin Valley Baseball League is an over-28 baseball league playing games during the spring and summer in Western Massachusetts. The league recently expanded to offer an over-28 fall league to allow players in the age range to face like competition during the fall months. There were four teams last year, and the league is expanding due to higher interest in its second year.

The tradition of fall league is to play with wood bats only. The league has nine-inning games and participants are guaranteed time in the field for at least four innings.

Play it forward: Time for a pickleball tournament

REGION - Registration is open for the 2nd annual Friends of the Jones Libraries Pickleball Tournament, scheduled for November 9, 2025. The tournament, played round robin style, will be held indoors at the Bay Road Tennis Club and Multi-Sport Center on the Hampshire College campus. It offers competition for players intermediate through advanced, ages 18 and older.

Kelly Erwin, Board member of the Friends commented, "We like to spoil the players who support our libraries! There will be refreshments throughout the day, free raffle prizes and gifts, as well as prizes for first and second prize winners in each division."

Pickleball's popularity is growing in leaps and bounds throughout the country. It's a game for all ages and can be played indoors or out. The Friends of the Jones Libraries hopes to channel this pickleball passion for a good cause. In partnership with BankESB and Fitness Together, as well as 25 additional sponsors, the



Emily Kim serving the next shot.



Ouran Kauman diving to catch the ball.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

nament where every point makes an impact, and your paddle has the power to improve lives."

What kinds of programs and services does the fundraising of the Friends support? The Jones Library, open to all, offers free computer usage and access to a myriad of digital resources, as well as thousands of online courses, and of course, books. Programs provided to patrons are as diverse as Sing with Your Baby, 50+ Jobseekers Networking Group, Art Studio for Adults, Teen Writers Group,

Juneteenth celebration, Summer Reading Program, ESL tutoring, Reading the Classics, Community Gaming Group, and lectures on topics ranging from financial literacy to quaking bogs. There are musical instruments to be borrowed, deliveries of books to the homebound, and even free museum passes.

Registration for the tournament ends October 11. For more information and to register: www.joneslibrary.org/pickleball.



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Belchertown to host first-ever Lake Wallace Fall Fest on October 4

A community celebration of outdoor recreation, accessibility, and the arts

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown will host its first-ever Lake Wallace Fall Fest on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This community celebration will feature three inclusive trail events: a 5K, a 1K, and an All Abilities Roll & Stroll designed to welcome participants of all ages, abilities, and mobility levels.

Beyond the races, attendees can enjoy celebrating the new enhancements to the Lake Wallace Sensory Trail, including expanded trailheads, a new Pocket Park, and original sculptures and benches created by local artists. The day will also feature live music, food trucks, and local vendors.

The Lake Wallace Fall Fest is also an opportunity for the public to contribute to the Lake Wallace gift account, which supports trail maintenance, repairs, educational programming, and future expansions. Current funding priorities include:

- Installation of an informational kiosk with inclusive educational materials
- Wayfinding & signage

aligned with Belchertown's branding plan

- Repairs to existing observation decks
- Trail cameras for security, maintenance, and live nature viewing opportunities

Local businesses and individuals are invited to become sponsors or community partners to help ensure a memorable, inclusive experience for all participants. Sponsorship levels range from Champion Donor (\$500+) with premium recognition, to general event sponsorship tiers starting at \$49.

For sponsorship details, contact recreation@belchertown.org.

Donations can be made by mailing a check to:

Town of Belchertown, Belchertown Recreation Department, 66 State Street, Building #1, Belchertown, MA 01007

About the Lake Wallace Sensory Trail

The Lake Wallace Sensory Trail is a fully accessible, inclusive nature trail in the heart of Belchertown, designed to welcome visitors of all ages and abilities. Featuring tactile guide cables, Braille signage, and open viewing areas, it provides both passive and active recreation opportunities while connecting the community to the natural beauty of Lake Wallace.

OBITUARIES

Tracy W. Brown, 70

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Tracy W. Brown, who left this world on August 27, 2025, at his home in Belchertown, Massachusetts. Born on December 6, 1954, in Palmer, Massachusetts, he was the son of Kenneth and Maureen (Lafond) Brown.



He is survived by his son Christopher Brown "the boy" and his wife Lisa, along with his two step-children, Edmund Fournier "Edjew" and Melissa Rex.

He also leaves behind his four siblings: Meredith Normandeau, Esther Legere, Thomas Brown "Bullhead", and David Brown, all of whom will remember him fondly. He is preceded by his brother, Kevin Brown "KB" and nephew Little Bullhead.

A lifelong resident of Belchertown, Tracy graduated from Belchertown High School in 1972, where he was a member of the basketball team. His career as a mechanic spanned over 50 years, retiring

after 20 years from Plastic Packaging Corp.

Tracy had a variety of interests that brought him joy. He was a passionate fan of drinking beer, the Dallas Cowboys (even though they suck!), and college basketball, taking every opportunity to support his teams. He looked forward to his yearly gatherings to celebrate the 3 horse races, especially the Kentucky Derby and the Super Bowl. He found peace in fishing and caring for his pet goats, Luke and Minnie, which he tended to with love, as well as his fish tank. Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home was entrusted with the arrangements.

DEATH NOTICES

Tracy W. Brown
Died August 27, 2025
Services Beers and Story Funeral Home

Mary Sue "Sue" Yvonne Dyer
Died August 29, 2025
Services private

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 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.

Mary Sue "Sue" Yvonne Dyer, 88

On Friday, August 29, Mary Sue "Sue" Yvonne Dyer, age 88, was called home by her Lord Jesus Christ. Born in Bagdad, KY, on Sept 21, 1936, to Boyd and Carrie Chism. She was predeceased by her first husband, Raymond Mills Jr., and son Randy Mills. She was also predeceased by her husbands, Larry Looney and Clifford Dyer. Three sisters and two brothers also predeceased Sue.



She is survived by a brother Melvin Chism, her daughter, Sharon Summers and son-in-law, John Summers, and Daughter Donna Cosker and son-in-law, Gary Cosker. Sue also leaves behind seven grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

After graduating from Bald Knob High School, she moved to Arlington, VA, where she met and married the love of her life, Raymond Mills Jr, to whom she was married for 46 years. During 22 of those years, she devoted her time to Ray and the family as a mother and the wife of a Navy officer.

She enjoyed houseplants, especially African violets. Gardening and having a vegetable garden were also her pastimes. Family vacations were camping and trips to the ocean. It was important to Sue to keep in touch, usually by mail, with family and friends.

Sue received great strength through her faith in Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior from a young age. Since her parents

didn't have a car when she was young, she would walk down the hill to wait on the dirt road that people traveled to church. She carried her bible and a hankie with a nickel in it for the offering plate. After trying this for a couple of weeks, someone finally stopped and offered her a ride to church. She never missed an opportunity to share her faith and love for Jesus. Even in the hours before her passing, she reminded her daughters, grandchildren, and their spouses to pray and trust in God. Proverbs 3:5-6.

There will be a private family celebration of life for local family members and a family reunion in Kentucky next summer, where Sue's remains will be interred at the Chism family plot. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Lebanon Community Cemetery, 2101 Lebanon Rd., Frankfort, KY 40601.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Utilitarian fashion accessory
- Engine additive
- Macaws
- Listens to
- Self-righteously moralistic person
- Made of wood
- Chinese lute
- Beginning military rank
- Indicates near
- Ties the score
- Chum
- Long ago
- Localities
- Midway between northeast and east
- Make fun of
- Tennis great Arthur
- Construction location
- Cow's noise
- Blue
- One of the Fab Four
- Formula 1 team
- Dash
- Lifting device
- Basics
- Keyboard key
- Old Irish alphabet
- Shaking of the Earth's surface
- Covered stadium
- Sword handles
- Longing or yearning
- Creators' social network
- Boxing's GOAT

CLUES DOWN

- Occur
- Show up
- Capital of Taiwan
- Ocean
- Givers and ___
- Gets ready
- Ad ___
- Fit of irritation
- Criminal organization
- Exclamation that denotes disgust
- American state
- Sensor hub
- Before
- The boundary of a surface
- Witnesses
- Singular
- Type of meal
- Music awards show
- Former French coin of low value
- A bag-like structure in an animal
- Schenectady County Airport
- Calm down
- Partner to cheese
- Cola brand
- Stepped on
- Japanese city
- Type of coating
- A citizen of Yemen
- Popular breakfast item corned beef
- On a line at right angles to a ship's length
- First responders
- Short-term memory

GRANBY

Join the library for a morning of art

The Granby Free Public Library will host 'The Seahorse: How to Pastel Paint,' with materials, for adults and teens.

GRANBY – Award-winning pastel artist Gregory John Maichack will present "The Seahorse," a pastel painting workshop for adults and teens 18+ hosted by the Granby Free Public Library on October 4, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. This is a pastel painting workshop designed for both beginners and advanced participants. Space is limited, so please call the Library at 413-467-3320 to pre-register.

In this all-new "The Seahorse: How to Pastel Paint," we will draw a seahorse OR use a template that Maichack provides of seahorses. We also create bubbles (a template will be provided as well). This is fun and has an ocean of possibilities, having instruction in expressive pastel strokes, blending, slurring, and layering. Additionally, emerald pastel pencils will be provided for details. All keep their 12 X 18 pastel painting of their personalized vivid seahorse. Photo references of various pastel seashores are supplied for ideas, allowing unfathomable possibilities. Maichack's own pastel-painted seahorses will unveil the process. All will be entertained by lively anecdotes on the mystery of seahorses.

Maichack, is an award-winning artist, a twice-nominated Massachusetts Cultural Council Gold Star Award Program nominee, and a seasoned pro from instructing at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Boston, colleges, to 100's of libraries. Maichack lives in the Berkshires and is a portraitist and painter working primarily in pastels. Winner of the Award of Merit from the Bennington Center for

the Arts: Impressions of New England Show 2003, he was also awarded the Savoir-faire Pastel Award from the Great Lakes Pastel Society. Maichack was commissioned by Westfield State College to paint the pastel portrait of the past president of Westfield State University, Dr. Frederick Woodward, which was unveiled at the dedication of the Woodward Center; and a pastel painted dictionary great Charles Merriam, unveiled by Merriam-Webster Co. at Merriam-Gilbert Library. He has been in many national juried shows and was awarded numerous Massachusetts Cultural Council grants. In addition to portraiture, his still lives and landscapes are represented by galleries from Kennebunkport, Maine, to San Francisco, California. Maichack is accepting requests to do various commissions to do pastel paintings. Visit his website at www.GregoryMaichack.com.

Maichack has been a faculty member of the Museum Studio School in the Fine Arts Museum Quadrangle in Springfield, MA, and taught at Holyoke and Greenfield Community Colleges, Westfield State University, East Works, the MFA, Boston, and The Guild, Northampton. Maichack's pastel paintings have been selected twice for the Annual National Exhibition of the Academic Artists Association, and as a result, Maichack was invited to be a member of this prestigious organization.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Granby Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

AMHERST

Fine Arts Center celebrates 50 years

Bold fall visual arts lineup

AMHERST – As the UMass Fine Arts Center marks its 50th anniversary season, its three visual arts spaces - the University Museum of Contemporary Art, Hampden Gallery, and Augusta Savage Gallery - put a spotlight on the region's thriving artistic community while continuing the Fine Arts Center's legacy of presenting groundbreaking contemporary artists from around the world.

"This season the visual arts present an astonishing display of artistic diversity," said Kristina Durocher, director of visual arts, at the Fine Arts Center. "With works of art by more than 80 artists on view this fall, the range of contemporary art practices on display reflects UMass' rich history of supporting living artists whose experiments and challenges to conventional ways of thinking are essential to the academic life of the campus and community."

Hampden Gallery

This fall marks the kickoff of the landmark Hampden Gallery Triennial, a juried exhibition selected from artworks submitted by artists living within 50 miles of UMass through an open artist call. The program's inaugural exhibition, "Reflecting on the Past/Dreaming the Future," juried by Nick Capasso, director of the Fitchburg Art Museum, showcases 54 cutting-edge works by emerging

and established artists working across media types.

"Reflecting on the Past/Dreaming the Future" will run from September 12 to December 3, with a special portion of the Hampden Gallery Triennial in the intimate Incubator Project Space running until May 8. An opening reception and panel discussion will be held on September 12 at 5 p.m.

University Museum of Contemporary Art

The University Museum of Contemporary Art opens September 12 with two exceptional group exhibitions, both running until December 5. An opening reception for both exhibitions will take place on September 11 from 5 to 7 p.m., featuring a special 50th anniversary kickoff.

In celebration of the Fine Arts Center's fiftieth anniversary celebration, "Artist/Fabricator" nods to the museum's first exhibition in 1975, "Artist & Fabricator," which featured a collection of monumental sculptures exploring collaborations between artists and industrial fabricators. "Artist/Fabricator" shifts the focus from artist-and-fabricator to artist-as-fabricator, emphasizing handcraft and tactility, as well as a rejection of industrialized production. Featuring 11 artists who integrate textiles into their studio practice, the exhibition explores fabric as a disruptive, experimental medium.

In the West Gallery, the museum celebrates the 25-year legacy of a local force in the world of print-

making: the Florence-based Zea Mays Printmaking. "Artistic Journey: Zea Mays Printmaking at 25 Years" recognizes the studio's history of workshops, education, research, and artist residencies committed to safer printmaking and artistic growth. The featured works of art are loosely organized into eight categories reflecting the ways artists see and know the world: language, sense perception, emotion, reason, imagination, intuition, memory, and belief.

Later on in the semester, opening Oct. 17 and running through the spring, Tammy Nguyen's exhibition, "Dialogue with a Collection: The Political Uses of Madness," showcases a new series of nine circular paintings in response to the Ellsberg Papers, housed in the UMass Libraries Special Collections and University Archives Research Center.

Augusta Savage Gallery rounds out the fall season as it delves into the role of tattoo imagery. In "Who Are You? Who Am I?" tattoo artist Alex Leon Sherker draws on his investigations into hybridized tattoo imagery as he transforms the gallery into an immersive environment in which symbols, icons, and illustrations are presented on walls, screens, and mirrors.

"Who Are You? Who Am I?" runs October 3 through October 31, with an opening reception on October 3 at 5 p.m. From November 14 through February 26, Augusta Savage

Gallery honors the beloved late UMass professor and artist, Richard Yarde, and his former student and UMass alumna, Susan Montgomery, class of 1993, in an exhibition celebrating watercolor painting.

"Reserved Passages: Watercolors by Susan Montgomery and Richard Yarde" muses on the untouched spaces in watercolor and reflects on the exchange of knowledge and the relationship between a teacher and student.

Residencies

As a feature of the Fine Arts Center's 50th anniversary season, all three visual arts venues - Augusta Savage Gallery, Hampden Gallery, and the University Museum of Contemporary Art - will host an artist in residence. Artists will spend the fall semester researching with UMass faculty in various departments, - including environmental studies, the library collections and the UMass research institute Slavery North - studying works in the museum's permanent collection, and engaging with students and the community.

Then, in the spring, each artist will showcase their work in a solo exhibition based on their research intertwined with their own studio practice.

Gallery and museum events are free and open to the public.

More information can be found at arts.umass.edu

Quabbin Days:

Celebrating the beauty, heritage of the Quabbin region

BELCHERTOWN – This fall, the Friends of the Quabbin invite residents and visitors alike to discover the beauty, history, and importance of the Quabbin Reservoir during Quabbin Days (www.quabbindays.org), a celebration of the region's role as both a critical drinking water supply and one of New England's most scenic outdoor destinations. Quabbin Days will be held the holiday weekend of October 10-13, 2025.

Taking place in the Quabbin Region (www.quabbindays.org/quabbin-region), which is made up of the dozen towns in the

Quabbin Watershed, Quabbin Days is a community-driven initiative designed to raise awareness about the Quabbin as the primary water source for 2.7 million Massachusetts residents, and a breathtaking landscape that offers world-class hiking, fishing, bird-watching, and photography opportunities.

"Most people don't realize that one of the most pristine and carefully protected water supplies in the country is also an incredible place to explore," said Ed Comeau of the Friends of the Quabbin. "Quabbin Days is about encouraging people to connect with this resource as a

place of remarkable natural beauty and cultural history by exploring the Quabbin Trail (www.quabbindays.org/quabbintrail) that connects these towns."

Held during the peak of fall foliage season, October 10-13, Quabbin Days encourages towns, businesses, and organizations within the Quabbin Region to host events, walks, tours, and open houses that spotlight what this area has to offer. Participation is informal and flexible: anyone can contribute an event, and visitors can plan their own adventures through www.QuabbinDays.org, which offers a growing calendar and interactive map of the region.

The Quabbin Reservoir, created in the 1930s, is one of the largest man-made public water supplies in the United States. Managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts

Water Resources Authority (MWRA), the reservoir and surrounding lands form a protected ecosystem that supports wildlife and clean water while offering miles of trails and stunning vistas.

Whether you're a hiker, angler, nature photographer, or history enthusiast, Quabbin Days is your invitation to rediscover, or discover for the first time, this extraordinary region.

To learn more, plan your visit, or submit an event, visit www.QuabbinDays.org.

About Friends of the Quabbin

The Friends of the Quabbin is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the natural, cultural, and historical significance of the Quabbin Region. Through advocacy, education, and community partnerships, the organization works to protect the watershed and share its stories with future generations.

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.

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

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact Pat James 413-726-8661.

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