

A+ Awards dinner recognizes resident

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

BELCHERTOWN – Serving your community is one of the most rewarding feelings, and is deserving of being celebrated, as individuals come together with the common goal of making the community they call home grow and shine all the brighter.

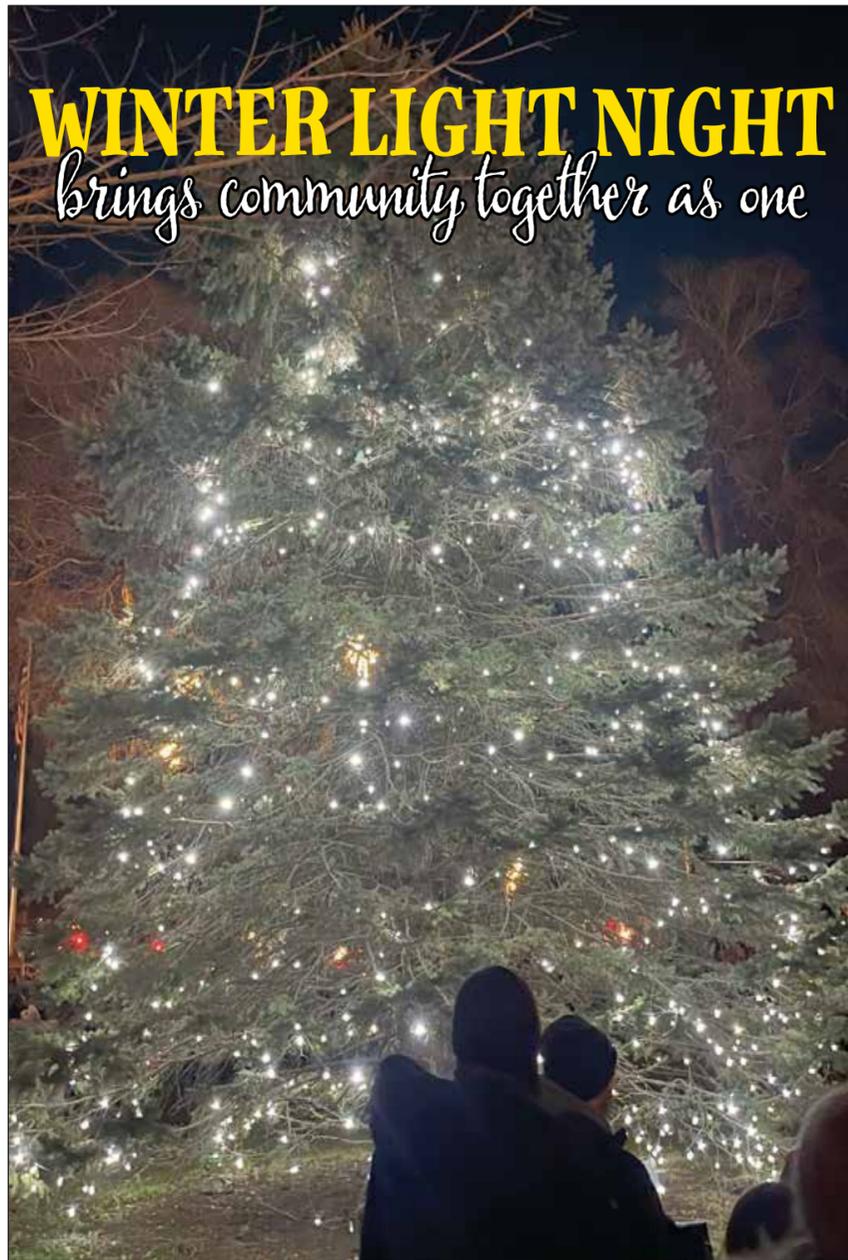
For Belchertown resident Sarah Maroney, serving and volunteering within the community is one of many things that drive her, and her hard work and dedication was awarded.

Every year, the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce hosts an A+ Awards dinner which honors individuals and organizations with an award to celebrate their work in enriching the life of the community through their work, whether it be in education, business, or civic engagement.

Maroney won the award for her work serving as Chair for the Belchertown Creative Economy Committee, as well as working with the town's former Creative Economy Consultant and Cultural District Manager to enhance the culture of Belchertown in many new ways.

"Winning the A+ Award for Community Service from the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce was deeply meaningful. It wasn't just personal validation, it reflected the importance of the work all of the volunteers in Town do to make our Town shine," said Maroney. "It really emphasized that the creative economy work, cultural events, and community building we've

Please see **A+ AWARD**, page 4



The tree lit up beautifully for all to see.



The horse-drawn carriage rides around the Common are a staple to Christmas events.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Annual tree lighting tradition continues

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The annual tradition of the tree lighting was added eight years ago when the Belchertown Cultural Council created the Winter Light Night celebration.

Taking place on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Small Business Saturday, the

Please see **LIGHTS**, page 14

Local author journeys to Greece and beyond

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – An author's life can take many different turns and lead to different paths and adventures, and for local author Edward Tick, it led him to Greece.

Growing up, Tick found companionship within the books he read, reading words of great writers, and diving into their worlds and mysteries within their pages.

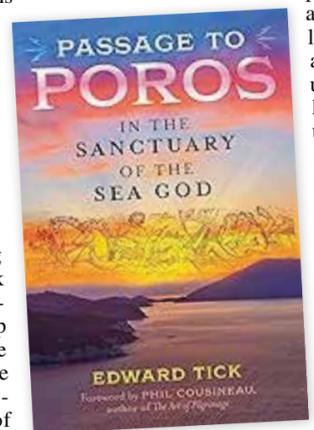
"Books became my best friends and trusted companions for exploring life's most urgent questions and issues. So, by the time I

was 15, I vowed to become a writer no matter what else I would do," said Tick.

Tick's imagination soared, and he dove into topics like exploration and psychology, and in college, found a love for using the humanities to explore and learn more about human nature, and chose to study literature and philosophy.

At the age of 30, Tick became a psychotherapist and worked towards his dream of writing books from when he was a teenager, and also

Please see **GREECE**, page 7



Tick's newest book, "Passage to Poros: In the Sanctuary of the Sea God."

SB discusses financial future, forecasting tool

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN — With an update from the town's accountant, the board delved into the intricacies of the town's budget during a recent meeting, debating the impact of school choice, the management of free cash, and the challenges of state funding formulas — all while seeking greater fiscal responsibility for the coming years.

The town recently received an updated report from the Department of Local Services, including a financial forecasting tool, with mixed reception from the board. Selectboard members reflected on the complexities of the process, the importance of communication, and the reality that

no forecasting tool or policy is a silver bullet.

The meeting, which began with a review of state aid and assessments, quickly turned to the question of whether Belchertown was benefiting overall from the state's school choice program.

"School Choice receiving is most of the increase between FY25 and 26," Town Accountant Jill Rossi said. The funds go "directly to the schools for their direct use. There's no appropriation required."

Selectboard Chair Lesa Lessard Pearson broached the topic's broader fiscal implications.

"Does Belchertown benefit from having school

Please see **FUTURE**, page 3



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sergeant Jason Richard, Mom, Stephanie, and 16-month old Evan, Scarlet, Fire Chief Evan Briant, and Kevin Calnan with Cops for Kids with Cancer.

GPD raise funds for a child with cancer

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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GRANBY – The Granby Police Department participated in a fundraised event with Cops for Kids with Cancer and successfully raised \$5,500 for the family of Evan Caraballo.

Cops for Kids with Cancer is a 501c3 charitable organi-

zation that focuses on raising funds to assist families with children who are fighting cancer, and to improve their

"We were proud to be able to offer our facility to provide a location for the check presentation," said Police Chief Kevin O'Grady. "Anytime the departments can assist a family, that is what we are here for. Our officers are always looking for ways to assist."

Scouts, 4-H Club work as one for wreath sales

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN — The holiday season is a time for giving, growing, and beautiful décor, and one way to find that perfect, festive, and wintry décor is to look locally.

Every weekend after Thanksgiving, the Boy Scout Troop 507 and the Belchertown 4-H clubs get together to sell wreaths in order to raise money for their clubs and activities.

Despite the freezing weather, the kids made sure to go out to the Common on Saturday morning with smiles and enthusiasm to sell the wreaths with any choice of décor for customers to choose from, whether it is just a simple bow, or a cute little owl, or some berries and pinecones, to decorate their homes for the holidays.

For the past ten years, they have worked together to sell the wreaths, standing outside on the common, waving signs and offering opportunities for people to choose how they want their wreaths to be decorated.

"It's a great way to bring two youth organizations together," said Chair of the Belchertown 4-H groups, Erin Thibault. "The kids get to catch up, and there's a true community spirit feeling in collaborating."

The wreaths are purchased from Lisa Greene, owner of Beach Plum Flower Shop in Newburyport, and she also donates supplies and ribbons in order to put the wreaths together.

The wreath sale wraps up the season for the 4-H clubs in order to raise money that is carried into the next year

Please see **WREATHS**, page 13



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

Miranda, Ginette, and Logan MacPhail with their new wreath to bring home.

DL&G TREE

Tree
Removal



Structural
Pruning



Crane
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Damage



Stump
Grinding



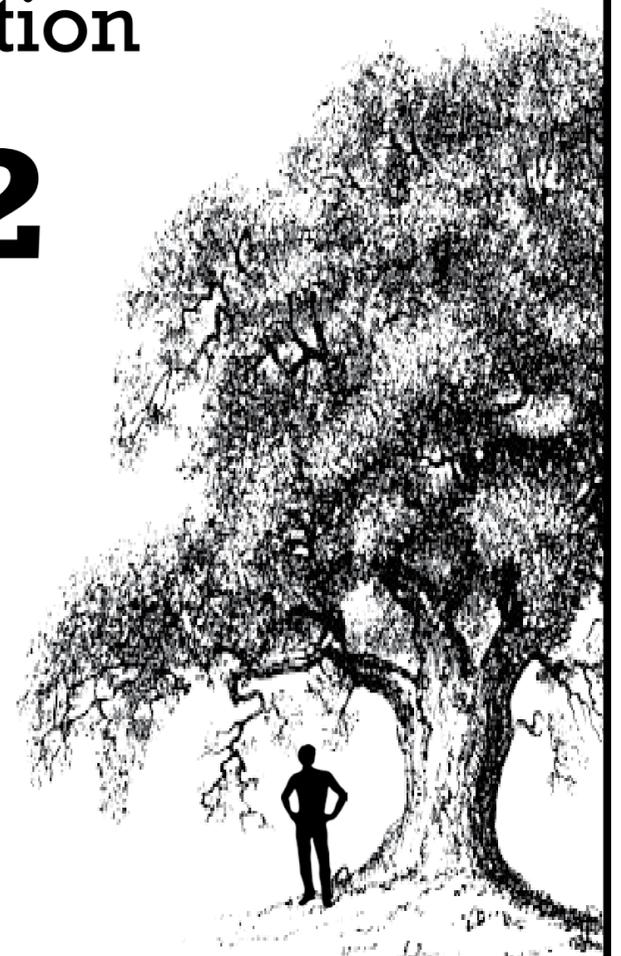
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DL&G TREE



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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Borris and Ed want to know if you've signed up for Emergency Communications from the Town.

Belchertown's In the Know initiative

BELCHERTOWN – If you want to stay In The Know with what is happening in town, there are two services that you can sign up for Emergency Alerts.

Emergency Alerts are for emergency or urgent situations and are time-sensitive. You can choose to receive this on your mobile

phone (which we strongly encourage, since it might be a time-sensitive situation), via email, or both.

The easiest and fastest way to sign up for emergency alerts is to text BELCHERTOWN to 38276, or going to the town website to sign up there.

Jingle Bell Bazaar returns to Church of Christ

GRANBY – The Jingle Bell Bazaar is coming up fast. December 6, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come enjoy our Cookie Walk, it will have hundreds of delicious cookies to choose from. Be sure to check out handmade crafts, freshly crafted greens, jewelry, a New to

You section, Bake Sale, hot Lunch, the Quilt Raffle, see Santa, and more. Santa will be in the building. Come and visit. This event helps support the work of our WOTC at Church of Christ Congregational, UCC Granby, MA. Come on down and get in the holiday spirit. a

Police association makes donation for Pink Patch Project

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Police Association made a \$1,700 donation to Cancer Connection as part of our 2025 Pink Patch Project.

We raised this amount through sales of our breast cancer awareness patches and hats. A portion of this donation was raised by Antonio's Pizza (Belchertown) during their breast cancer fundraiser night on Oct. 20, 2025.

Cancer Connection is based in Northampton and assists people in the local area. This donation was made to benefit those directly affected by cancer.

Thank you to everyone who helped us raise this money this year!



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Members of the Belchertown Police Association with the pink patches they sold to raise funds for Cancer Connection.

Church celebrates its one-year anniversary

BELCHERTOWN – Saint Barnabas Anglican Church has celebrated its first anniversary this past month. The parish was formed a year ago on October 19, 2024. It has been worshipping in the chapel of the Congregational Church on the Belchertown Common, 18 Park Street.

St. Barnabas Church was received as a mission of the Diocese of the Northeast during the annual synod, which was held in Concord, New Hampshire, this past September.

The Bishop of the diocese, The Right Reverend

Alexander Henderson Webb, made his first episcopal visit to the parish in August. The bishop received several new members at that time.

St. Barnabas Anglican Church celebrates Holy Communion at 4 p.m. every Saturday at the chapel on the Belchertown Common. All are certainly welcome.

The parish will begin Bible study at a future date. Those interested in Bible study or more information are encouraged to contact The Reverend Thomas Stockton, Rector, at tstockton@earthlink.net or 732-793-1847.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Smiling at the entrance, Caran welcomes you in for a Christmas tour.

Tours of Christmas Past come to the Stone House Museum

BELCHERTOWN – As the Christmas season approaches and we begin decorating our homes and communities with all the trees, garlands, ornaments, and lights that we look upon as traditional, the Stone House Museum is opening its doors to welcome you in for a look at what a Victorian Christmas would have looked like.

Many of you, when picturing a "traditional" Christmas, may think of images from Clement C. Moore's The Night Before Christmas, where visions of sugarplums danced through their heads. But early New Englanders did not celebrate Christmas. It was a festival celebrated only by religious minorities. So where did our traditions come from?

Queen Victoria and the people of the Victorian Era revived old traditions and created joyful festivities and delightful customs like caroling, sending Christmas cards, and decorating trees. They transformed the folk figures of Father Christmas and Santa Claus into symbols of holiday generosity and popularized Germany's Christmas tree.

The Belchertown Historical Association welcomes you to attend our Victorian Candlelight Tours at the Stone House Museum this holiday season. Tours will be led by interpreters wearing traditional Victorian dress. The house will be filled with garlands, candlelight, music, craft activities, and the smells of homemade treats. Tours will be held on Sunday, November 30, Saturday, December 6, and Friday, December 12. Tours will begin at 6, 7 and 8 p.m. For tickets information call 413-230-2022 or visit our website and Facebook page: stonehousemuseum.org.

FUTURE from page 1

choice overall, from a fiscal standpoint?" she asked.

The assessment was cautiously affirmative.

"It nets out at \$400,000 or so to the good, the money coming in," said Rossi, but cautioned that not all costs might be fully accounted for. "That sending tuition is part of the state assessments that we take off the top of the revenue available... so it defrays what we have for revenue overall."

Still, the numbers show "that it benefits the town," Town Manager Steve Williams said. Though there was consensus the question should be revisited regularly: "The question needs to continue to be asked just to make sure that it continues to benefit the town."

Another board member, Nicole Miner, connected the discussion to broader funding changes. "A 3% increase?... I'm attributing it to the chapter 78 going up quite a bit from previous years, and the

school choice in funds that we're receiving," Miner said.

The mysterious mechanics of state formulas also drew attention.

"We as a community are really in good shape, in comparison to a lot of communities in our area. We have been really fiscally responsible all these years."

– Jill Rossi

"The chapter 78 formula is, really, it's based on the wealth, relative wealth, of the community population, all of these different factors. And so I cannot answer that question," Rossi said, in response to Miner's inquiry about the apparent "bump" in state aid.

Discussion soon shifted to the status of town "free cash" — excess revenue after projections — and the perennial question of how much is enough.

"The last thing we need to do is project revenues and

come up short, because then we had a cut budget, and that hurts," Rossi said. "So projections are always going to be conservative. That extra money at the end of the year goes into free cash. Free cash is not a waste, because we use it for our Stabilization Fund, our capital improvement planning."

Yet the state's Department of Local Services (DLS) wants towns to set aside more, according to a recent report to the Selectboard.

"DLs is actually wanting us to have a larger free cash number every year, not smaller. So even though these numbers look pretty big," Williams said. "It's not what the DLS wants."

However, concerns were expressed about the impact on taxpayers.

"If we're trying, we cut our budgets and underestimated

our revenues correspondingly in order to hit this, in my mind, arbitrary 7%, and so we have not done right by our departments, nor have we done right by our taxpayers," Rossi said.

Comparing Belchertown's fiscal standing to others, confidence was expressed.

"We as a community are really in good shape, in comparison to a lot of communities in our area," Rossi said. "We have been really fiscally responsible all these years."

Amid the dense numbers and disappointments with forecasting tools, there was agreement on the value of budgeting conservatively.

"You want to have what's budgeted... so you know where we are in that respect, that's valuable," Pearson said.

With department budgets due Jan. 15 and state numbers expected soon after, Belchertown's fiscal future remains a balancing act — between prudence, transparency and meeting the evolving needs of its residents.

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Celebrating the holidays at the Belchertown COA

BELCHERTOWN – Get ready to join in on the fun at the COA, and be sure to check out their Facebook page for more fun and weekly events.

Gnome for the Holidays

Please join us for a special Prime Rib Holiday meal
Friday, December 19, at 10:30 a.m.

Doors will open at 10:15 a.m. for a performance by Freddie Marion, featuring a wide variety of songs from some of your favorite artists! Be sure to wear your best holiday sweater.

Thanks to our BSCCA for sponsoring this performance and meal.

Friday, December 12, is National Ice Cream and Violins Day

The origin of this odd holiday is shrouded in mystery, but who wouldn't want to celebrate it by eating some ice cream and listening to some violin music.

Join us at 10:30 a.m. for a holiday violin performance by Cynthia LaBarre, followed by lunch and delicious dairy-free ice cream for dessert, sponsored by CAN (Compassionate Alliance for Nonhumans)!

Call Kim to sign up by December 11 at noon, at 413-323-0420 ext. 508

Memory Café: Better Together

Wednesday, December 10, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Looking for individuals who are experiencing memory loss to join us with their caregivers for this fun and engaging program. Participate in an activity with Fallon Health's PACE and meet others who are on a similar journey. Call 413-323-0420 ext. 501 to sign up.

Medicare Open Enrollment

October 15 through

December 7

Medicare Open Enrollment runs from October 15 through December 7. During this period, eligible individuals can review and compare plans and switch between plans or providers. All open enrollment appointments for Medicare Plan reviews with Laurene are currently full. Please contact your current plan or Medicare (1-800-Medicare) for assistance.

Fuel Assistance Program Now through April 30

The Fuel Assistance Program is open. Call Heather to set up an appointment for assistance. You will need to have all required documents to send along with your application. Please call Heather if you have any questions regarding the program or what is required.

For all Social Service inquiries, especially during the busy Open Enrollment time for both programs, we ask that you always call ahead for an appointment rather than drop in. Thank you.

Laurene Kendall : 323-0420, Ext. 505

Heather Moran: 323-0420, Ext. 509

We're excited to share that our events at the Senior Center are growing in popularity.

While we love seeing so many familiar faces, our space has its limits. To ensure fairness for all attendees, we've introduced some new reservation guidelines.

To make reservations for large parties, please call Stephanie starting at 9 a.m. on the date specified in the newsletter. Please note that her voicemail is time-stamped, so starting at 9 a.m., reservations will be granted in the order that

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Belchertown community who came out to support Sarah Maroney in her award.

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done in Belchertown are seen, appreciated, and believed to matter."

Maroney now works as a Community Development Senior Planner with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, where she works with communities all across Hampden and Hampshire Counties, and has been doing so for the past seven years.

and have the privilege to work with communities all across Hampden and Hampshire Counties, helping them thrive using the skills I gained while volunteering for the Town and related organizations more than seven years.

"I am inspired by the people I volunteer with. Belchertown has so many amazing volunteers that range from people who have been involved for generations and newcomers who want to participate in shaping our future," said Maroney.

Recently, at the Lake Wallace Fall Fest at the beginning of October, the community came together to celebrate, with over 20 community organizations and vendors, 100 participants, and 500 visitors to the event, all thanks to the dedication of the volunteers who put it together.

"I love the positive impacts volunteering can make. I believe if you are going to live somewhere, you should be part of how that place functions. I have made some of my strongest relationships in town from taking part in Town committees, organizations, and just showing up to lend a helping hand when possible," said Maroney.

Maroney grew up in Belchertown, and has always called it home, reflecting on her pride in the "resiliency" of the community, and how it grew out of its old agricultural roots and into the flourishing town we know it today.

"I want people to know that I am so thankful for the time

spent with my fellow volunteers in Town. Volunteering changed the course of my life and opened up a career I never knew existed," said Maroney. "I love that the community takes great pride in our Town and wants to engage in community-driven projects."

Working with and volunteering within the community does not have to be something big right away, but small. You can start by attending a community event, and look at it to see how it flows, and chat with the organizers.

"You don't need to make a huge commitment or take on the world to make a difference," said Maroney. "The volunteers in this town work tirelessly to give residents places to gather and reasons to come together, often completely in the background. Cherish what we have in Town and join in to keep making it better each year."

You can start by volunteering with little things like staying an hour or two to

help clean up, and then there you are, working to serve the community in a small way, yet with a large impact.

If you are already planning to go to a community-run event, add an extra hour or two onto your visit to help keep the event running smoothly. Share your expertise with your community. Committees can always use an added voice or skill to keep the town running. Be thoughtful when using a Town space or attending a community event of how that space is maintained or who made the event a reality.

"I am most grateful for all of my fellow volunteers, whether you donate an hour of your time or you are putting in countless hours, you make such a difference for our community. Belchertown has so much potential, and this recognition reminds me we're on the right track. I'm excited for what's next, and I hope others will jump in to keep the momentum growing," said Maroney.



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Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 12, 2025

Diamond Wedding Anniversary celebrated

BELCHERTOWN – Mr. and Mrs. Robert Williams, residents of Belchertown since 1973, celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on November 27, 2025. Sixty years ago, they were married at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Manchester, New Hampshire. In 1973 they relocated from Grenier Air Force Base in New Hampshire to Belchertown so that Bob could continue his military duty in the United States Air Force Reserves and his Air Reserve Technician position as a Flight Mechanic at Westover Air Reserve Base, Chicopee, Massachusetts.

Kay and Bob's two sons, Timothy Williams and Thomas Williams were educated in the Belchertown School System and graduated from Belchertown High School. A graduate of UMASS, Tim, his wife April and family reside in Westfield, Massachusetts; Retired from the United States Air Force Reserves and a Master Plumber, Tom, his wife Carolyn and family reside in Dover, New Hampshire.

Kay and Bob have been active parishioners of Saint Francis Catholic Church for over 50 years. Kay retired from the Bell and Hudson Insurance Agency; Bob retired from the United States Air Force Reserves as a Chief Master Sergeant and as an Air Reserve Technician at Westover Air Reserve Base, Chicopee, MA.



Kay and Bob Williams' wedding photo from their wedding on November 27, 1965.



Kay and Bob Williams, the happy couple.

For over 60 years, this couple has shared countless experiences—raising children, building careers, experiencing personal growth, and navigating life's ups and downs. Their

60th anniversary is not just a celebration of surviving time but thriving through it together. Bob and Kay's love story is one of enduring strength and beauty. Sixty years of love, laughter, and partnership—what an incredible journey!

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



BPD to host its annual Stuff-a-Cruiser toy drive

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Police Department will be hosting their annual Stuff a Cruiser Toy Drive on December 6th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you would like to donate toys, please bring them to our station on that date. We

are looking for unwrapped toys for children aged 6-14 which we will be donating to local families.

Suggested toys include: Legos, board games, art and craft supplies, sports equipment, educational toys, and sleds.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

From left to right: State Representative Aaron Saunders, Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, Dawn Cote, Grants Manager, and Jennifer Turner Vice Chair of the Select Board.

Belchertown awarded \$345K in state grants

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown was awarded \$345,000 in state grants through the FY26 Community One Stop for Growth program.

Here's what the funding is supporting:

- \$30,000 for a Downtown Business Marketing Plan

to help strengthen our local businesses and attract more visitors.

- \$125,000 to update our Zoning Bylaw and Map - a much-needed refresh since it hasn't been comprehensively updated in over 30 years.
- \$190,000 for a new roof for

the former Tagdell School building, helping move the Carriage Grove redevelopment forward.

These investments are helping Belchertown plan for the future, support local businesses, and revitalize key community spaces.

COA from page 4

calls are received, and any messages left before 9 a.m. will not be honored.

You may make a reservation for yourself and one guest. The name of your guest is required at the time of the call. Please refrain from requesting that staff add your name to the large party list before the designated reservation date.

You will get an automated call letting you know if your reservation was successful or if you've been placed on the waitlist. It's important to listen to the entire message; just receiving the call doesn't guarantee you have a reservation.

If you do not receive a call back, please contact us for confirmation before the event date. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

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EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

Christmas will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of December 22-26, 2025:

Wednesday, December 17 at 2 PM for December 25 issue

- Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Thursday, December 18 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue

- Agawam Advertiser News
- Sentinel • Quaboag Current • The Journal Register

Friday, December 19 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue

- Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Monday, December 22 at 2 PM for December 26 Issue

- Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

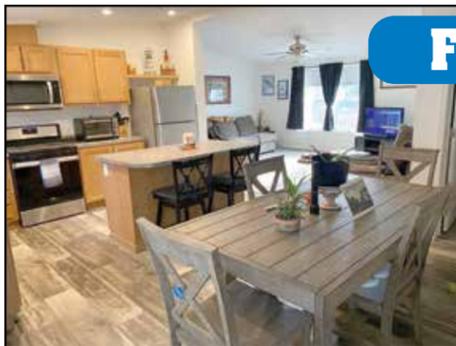
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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

Is Social Security really a “good deal?”

Dear Rusty:

You've said in the past that most people recoup their SS contributions within five years of starting benefits, thus Social Security “is an exceptionally good deal.”

Your calculation is correct but misleading; if it were not, SS would have been insolvent long ago. I will, in fact, get “my” contributions back in about five years, but my employer's contributions will take another five years and that is money that my employer could have been paying me, so they are really “my” contributions. But even that ignores the time value of money.

I did a calculation as if my contributions, along with those of my employer, were invested in an account earning 5% per year. That would provide me the equivalent of SS income for 24 years, approximately what my life expectancy was when I retired. So, it's not a bad deal, but it is hardly exceptional. It is roughly the equivalent of me investing that money throughout my career and using the total to buy an annuity.

Of course, Social Security does have the advantage of certainty, at least until it goes broke. My portfolio would not earn a steady 5% every year, though that is at the low end of what financial managers would expect over a long period. And it does force people to save, many of whom would otherwise make no provision for retirement.

Signed: Realistic Senior

Dear Realistic:

Thanks very much for your feedback on my previous article. I think it's important to draw a distinction for SS contributions made by an employer, because that is not money the individual personally pays, but rather an obligation for employers to help fund the Social Security program.

Without that federal obligation, it is doubtful that employers would, instead, provide employees with equivalent additional compensation, so the thought that these are really your contributions is not a fair assessment. Indeed, they are contributions which happen to be tied to your earnings level (to a cap), for which employers receive relief on their corporate income tax and likely would not

make if not required by law.

As you have noted, Social Security has the advantage of certainty, something which is lacking when it comes to investing the equivalent amounts in the financial markets. And, as you have hinted, there exists a substantial failure by future American retirees to save adequately for their retirement, a problem well known in most financial circles. Thus, the certainty of Social Security makes it a crucial part of everyone's retirement planning and it will be there.

Despite all the angst attributed to the current financial issues facing the program, there is little doubt that Social Security is here to stay. The question is what reform is needed to make the program fully solvent for generations of future Americans? The Association of Mature American Citizens has developed a proposal to sensibly reform Social Security and avoid the currently projected 2033 date that the SS Trust Funds are expected to be depleted, which will necessitate an across-the-board cut for everyone.

We have little doubt that the reform needed will happen; it would be political suicide for Congress if it did not and hopefully soon. You can read about AMAC's proposed solution at this link by visiting www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee.

The Association of 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 of 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.

Again, thank you for your feedback and commentary. Please know that we very much appreciate your thoughts and are always willing to discuss these issues.



Wreaths and swags for one and all

For the last two weeks we've been busy decorating Old Sturbridge Village for their Christmas by Candlelight program.

The garland, wreaths, bows and swags are all up, and the planters have been filled with greens. It was fast-paced fun, and oh so rewarding. The museum looks absolutely magical.

I filled planters side by side with a coworker who, in her 30 plus years, has never done this part of the job with me. As we stuck greens and stood back to assess our work, it occurred to me that I've grown up making all of these decorations, like my parents before me!

I had assumed everyone else had too, but here we had Nina, who in her 60s, was at it for the first time. If you find yourself ready to make your own decorations, here are a few pointers from the archives.

My Dad was the wreath-maker in the family, and usually a post Thanksgiving walk in the woods would yield his raw materials. The wreaths he made would be taken back to decorate a college dorm or whatever apartment my older siblings would return to after Thanksgiving break some 40 plus years ago.

One wreath would also make its way to the front door of our little red house, too. Decorated with a red ribbon and a few pine cones, it really was something so simple and so beautiful in the same right.

His approach is the same one I'll recommend today.

Start with a wire coat hanger bent into a circle and attach some pliable wire to it. Then, wrap little bunch-

es of greens to the base one after another.

you want to make, then set up an assembly-line of sorts. Choose a sturdy green for the base of the swag- extra Christmas tree boughs would be perfect for this as well.

I cut however many I need to the same size, and I lay them out pretty side up. Next, I choose another type of green a bit smaller and put it on top. I repeat the process six or seven times until I have a nice upside-down “fan.”

Here too, varying texture is nice, although Mom's feathery white pine and pine cone swags are pretty by themselves.

To complete your swag, wrap wire around the stems four or five inches down from the top, leaving a loop on the back for a hanger. You can cover the wire with a bow. I have often wired two swags together horizontally.

Place a bow in the middle, where the two intersect and hang your creation over a window or door, or even underneath a window for a different take on decorating.

Whether this is your first attempt at wreath and swag making or you've been at it for years, enjoy this holiday ritual, just as my mom and dad did.

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.

in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Be careful to lay them alongside, not on top of each other. It's important, however, to have the wire catch a little bit of the stem of the prior bunch – that way the wreath will be good and tight.

You can make a wreath of just extra boughs from your Christmas tree, but mixing in other types of greens will make it more interesting. I like to use prunings from my home landscape: mountain laurel, boxwood, juniper, and white pine among others will look great together because they vary in color and texture.

You can dress up a green wreath with pinecones, winterberries and artificial fruit, not to mention a big bow. Most types of Christmas tree boughs are conducive to wreath making, but wear thick gloves if you are using Colorado blue spruce as your base – it sure is picky!

When my Dad gave up making his famous wreaths, Mom took a simpler yet more elaborate approach to decorating our house. She would make a swag for each window!

First determine how many

They can survive 40 degrees below Fahrenheit nights. Sometimes huddling together for warmth.

They breed in the far north and montane west and visit most of North America during winter. Although it used to nest almost exclusively in boreal spruce-fir forests, the golden-crowned kinglet has expanded its breeding range southward into conifer stands of the Midwest and Appalachians.

They usually raises two large broods of young, despite the short nesting season of the northern boreal forest. The female feeds her first brood only up until the day after they leave the nest.

Golden-crowned kinglet



in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

A Brimfield resident sent an email to report seeing a golden-crowned kinglet on Nov. 17 in a dwarf Alberta spruce tree in front of his house.

He said, “[It was] very active, but I got to see the bright yellow crown patch.”

Golden-crowned kinglets are a small bird, not much larger than a hummingbird. The male is boldly marked with a black eyebrow stripe and flashy lemon-yellow crest.

They spend much of their

time high up in dense spruce or fir foliage and that is the place to find them.

Their high, thin call notes and song is often heard before catching sight of them.

The Brimfield resident called them “very active.”

Turley Publications Letters to the Editor Policy

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

Turley Election Policy

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

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

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Please see **BIRDS**, page 11

GREECE from page 1

began to write for what he really loved: exploring the "inner world" of a person's mind, and exploring "the techniques of the imagination to best understand and explore our human condition."

Tick went on to write nine books, writing in the chichi-historical nonfiction genre, and has found his passion, as, for the past 40 years, he has been writing books, articles, and poetry about these topics and the ability he has had to create a positive impact on people.

"I married psychology and the humanities as both a therapist and writer. And I have been especially engaged in working with war veterans and survivors, and with exploring the ancient Greek traditions," said Tick.

"Passage to Poros: In the Sanctuary of the Sea God," Tick's ninth and newest book, reflects on of Tick's many pilgrimages to Greece, which he has been leading since 1955.

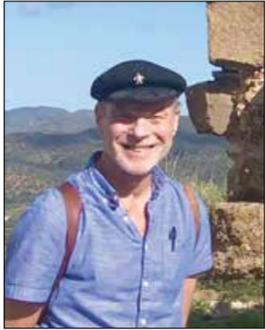
"Every journey inspires me. My trips are pilgrimages. I only guide small groups who immerse in Greek mythology, culture, history, tragedy, philosophy, and relate these ancient sources of wisdom and spirituality to our own lives," said Tick.

From the landscape, histories, heritage, stories, and people, Tick has found a warm and welcoming world to dive into and explore within Greece, and it has grown into finding a place for deep growth and healing, and experiences equated to miracles, oracles, and visions.

"I am a poet as well as a nonfiction writer. I keep extensive journals as I travel, and much of the writing is poetry. Poetry is the language of the soul. When I am in Greece in a writing reverie, whether of poetry or prose, it is as if I am in the archaic world where everything is supercharged, and our lives are mythic," said Tick.

"I try to hear and see and sense the god or goddess or sacred site or mythological figure as vital, real, and channel their stories into language. When I'm at my best, I imagine I travel from my desk in Belchertown to wherever and with whomever I am writing about. I hope my readers take these journeys," said Tick.

The journeys he takes and the pilgrimages he leads help to immerse him in the world



Author Ed Tick in Greece.

of Greece, and its culture and beyond, allowing him to create a non-fiction piece that reflects the magic of being within the ancient country.

Through taking these journeys, it has allowed him to become immersed into this world, and then reflect its characteristics into his writing so those who read his work feel they are there with him, and his belief that we ourselves lead mythical lives that are worth discovering, exploring, and sharing.

"My own journeys and the pilgrimages I lead are to immerse in the ancient world to facilitate soul healing and growth. We indeed lead mythic lives. As an archetypal psychotherapist, I use myth to unfold and reveal our paths and destinies. I hope my books give readers an experience of being on a mythic and cultural journey. I hope they help readers practice living more deeply and mythically themselves. Really, psychology, mythology, and history are one great interlocking story. We each live our particular myths in this one collective epic. We can live better, deeper, more wisely and well when we know ourselves at this archetypal level."

You can learn more about his book at the Clapp Memorial Library this coming Thursday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m., where you can hear more from Tick, his travels,



Poseidon's Sanctuary in Greece.



Ed greeting a friend at his special book signing.



The room filled at the book event in Greece.

and the book that deep-dives into the realm of the myth, and just how real those myths can be.

RIGHT: A statue of Asklepios, the god of healing, where Tick teaches about his ancient dream techniques in his books.



A view of the island of Poros in Greece.

■ POLICE LOG

Granby Police

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 247 calls for the week of Nov. 14 through Nov. 27. Those arrested are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Saturday, Nov. 15
9:09 p.m. – A motorist reported a minor two-car accident. There were no injuries.

Monday, Nov. 17
9 a.m. – A resident called to report that they received a call from a reported Apple employee stating that multiple accounts have been opened in her name. They asked her for her bank account numbers. The resident disconnected the call and called the station to report the incident. They were advised to keep an eye on their credit history and to sign up for fraud alerts.

10:40 a.m. – A resident came to the station to report their property had been damaged.

Tuesday, Nov. 18
4:32 p.m. – A motorist reported striking a deer. There no injuries.

8:54 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed that the vehicle was traveling at 56 mph in a posted 35 mph zone. The vehicle was stopped, and the operator was issued a

civil citation for speeding.

Wednesday, Nov. 19
12:03 p.m. – A motorist came to the station to report striking a guardrail on Nov. 11.

5:20 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

Saturday, Nov. 22
1:35 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer performed a random license plate query revealing that the vehicle's registration was revoked for insurance. The vehicle was stopped, and the operator was issued a criminal citation.

Wednesday, Nov. 26
1:25 p.m. – A resident wanted the department to be aware that they got a call from Medicare wanting her personal information. They did not give them any information and hung up on them.

Thursday, Nov. 27
6:08 a.m. – A caller reported that a vehicle struck a guardrail at the intersection of State Street and Porter Street. The vehicle then fled the scene. A license plate was obtained, and the matter is under investigation.

1:18 p.m. – A motorist reported a two-car accident. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.



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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Warm up this December at CML

BELCHERTOWN – Warm up at the Clapp Memorial Library this December with a variety of events and programs for every age. We hope to see you soon!

Christmas holiday schedule: The Library will close at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24, and remain closed on Thursday, December 25. Regular hours resume Friday, December 26.

FOR GENERAL AUDIENCES:

Belchertown Community Bells Choir

Tuesday, December 16, 7 to 8 p.m.

Join the Belchertown Community Bells Choir for a free concert at the Clapp Memorial Library. The Choir have been playing and presenting concerts for nearly 40 years. This volunteer musical group is led by Bill McClure and plays several different styles of music from religious to pop. They enjoy ringing, rehearsing, and sharing their music with others in the community.

Community Wellness

Friday, December 19, 3 to 5 p.m.

Clapp Memorial Library and BOAT welcome anyone in the community needing access to health care, mental health/substance use resources to the library on the 3rd Friday of every month from 3 to 5 p.m. Free refreshments will be available.

FOR ADULTS:

Daughters Book Talk with Corinne Demas

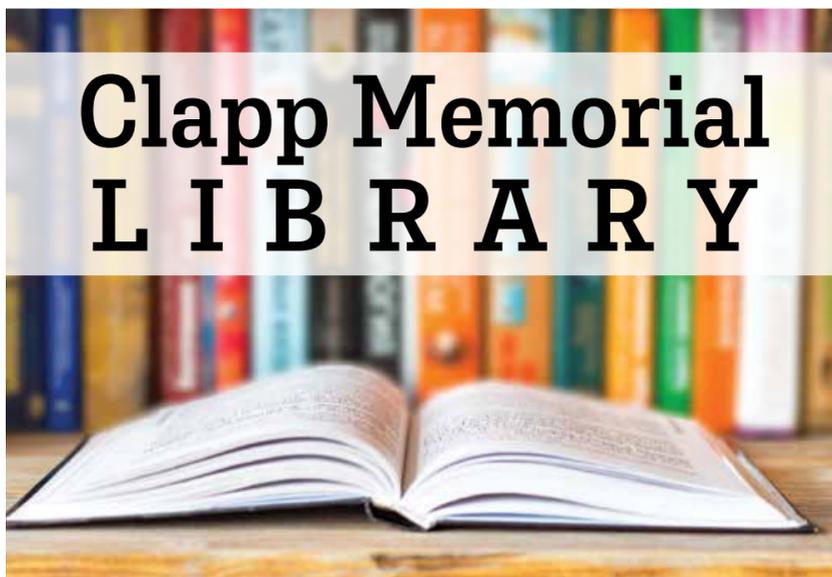
Wednesday, December 10, 7 to 8 p.m.

Corinne Demas will be at the Clapp Memorial Library to talk about her new book, *Daughters*, a novel “exploring the age-old friction between mothers and daughters, a story of a family rediscovering itself.” Corinne Demas is an award-winning author and Professor Emerita of English at Mount Holyoke College. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Passage to Poros: In the Sanctuary of the Sea God Book Talk with Dr. Edward Tick

Thursday, December 11, 7 to 8 p.m.

Join us for a book talk with Dr. Edward Tick, author of *Passage to Poros: In the Sanctuary of the Sea God*. Explore the reawakening of ancient Greek healing practices by taking this journey of transformation,



myth, and divine presence to the sacred island of Poros, a site of pilgrimage and healing for more than 3,000 years. This book examines pilgrimage, sanctuary, and asylum, the duties of Poseidon, who was the ruling god of Poros. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Adult Winter Reading Program

December 20, 2025 - February 20, 2026

Adults are invited to participate in “Cozy Up with a Good Book”, our Winter Reading Program. Enjoy books and fun, cozy activities as you complete the squares. Earn chances to win some great prize bundles. Sign up at clapplibrary.beanstack.org or on the Beanstack app. Physical Bingo cards are also available for pick-up at the library. Get all the details when you sign up. For adults age 18 and over. See below for our Teen Winter Reading Bingo. This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

FOR TEENS:

Anime and Manga Club

Wednesday, December 10, 4 to 5 p.m.

The Clapp Memorial Library is starting an Anime and Manga club for tweens and teens in grades 6-8! The club meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm. During club meetings, we will watch 1-2 episodes of an anime, discuss manga, share artwork, eat snacks, and more! Registration is required. Email macona@cwmar.org to sign up.

Free Food Friday

Friday, December 12, 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Teens are invited to the library after school for free snacks as they visit and use the library! Students must be in grades 7-12 and arrive between 2 to 3:30 p.m. for a free snack, courtesy of the library, as supplies last. This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

Teen Winter Reading Bingo

December 20, 2025 - February 20, 2026

For the first time ever, the Clapp Memorial Library is running a Teen Winter Reading Program! Teens in grades 7-12 are invited to sign up for Teen Winter Reading Bingo at clapplibrary.beanstack.org or on the Beanstack app! Physical Bingo cards are also available for pick-up at the library. Participating is easy - and, of course, there are prizes! Get all the details when you sign up. Save the date, and start earning tickets on December 20th! This program is funded by the Friends of the Clapp Memorial Library.

FOR CHILDREN:

Drawing Class: Doughnut Forget the Sprinkles!

Thursday, December 11, 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Join us for a doughnut drawing class for kids with Nicole Gibbs. The class will be sprinkled with drawing, story, and DOUGHNUTS (well, at least on paper) as we read *Arnie the Doughnut* by Laurie Keller and practice our doughnut drawing skills! Registration is

required. Register online at clapplibrary.org or call the library at 413-323-0417.

Magic: The Gathering

Saturdays now through January 10, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Join us for Magic The Gathering in the Activity Room. Bring your own deck or use one of our learning decks. Everyone is welcome; however, players must be fluent readers. Players under the age of 10 must have a caregiver who is at least 14 years old on the Library premises. Join us for every session or just one - it's up to you! We will have two instructors to help get games started and assist with the rules of the game. No registration is required. Check the Library website or Facebook page if there is inclement weather.

Winter Story Times -

Beginning the week of December 8

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

Babytime Story Time (for ages 3-12 months)

9 to 9:45 a.m., Mondays, December 8, 15, January 5, 12, 26, and February 2, 9

First Steps Story Time (for ages 13-24 months)

10 to 10:45 a.m., Mondays, December 8, 15, January 5, 12, 26, and February 2, 9

Toddler Time (for ages 2-3 years)

9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Tuesdays, December 9, 16, January 6, 13, 27, and February 3, 10

Preschool Story Time (for ages 3-6 years)
9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Thursdays, December 11, 18, January 8, 15, 29, and February 5, 12

The Clapp Memorial Library is open:

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

*The Library will close at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24, and remain closed on Thursday, December 25, for the Christmas holiday. Regular hours resume Friday, December 26.

Chamber and UMassFive College Credit Union partner for 5th annual Gift Card Match Day

AMHERST - The Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the fifth annual Holiday Gift Card Match Day on Thursday, December 4, 2025. Sponsored by UMassFive College Credit Union (UMassFive) with a \$5,000 match, this highly anticipated annual event invites the community to double their holiday shopping power and support local businesses.

Starting at 9 a.m. at the Visitors Information Center (35 South Pleasant Street, Amherst), community members can purchase a \$25 Amherst Area Gift Card, with a small \$1 processing fee. For every card purchased, the Chamber will provide a gift card with a value of \$50, effectively doubling the shopping power. Each individual may purchase up to two matched gift cards while supplies last.

“Gift Card Match Day turns generosity from our Match Sponsor, UMassFive, into a direct investment in our community,” said Jacob Robinson, Executive Director of the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. “By participating, shoppers become part of a collective effort to strengthen our local economy and uplift the small, local busi-



nesses that make the Amherst Area unique. It's a win for shoppers, local businesses, and the region!”

The program supports a diverse array of local businesses, from boutiques to restaurants to service providers, reinforcing the Chamber's mission to foster economic growth and vitality in the Amherst Area.

“Gift Card Match Day is all about coming together as a community,” said Craig Boivin, Vice President of Marketing at UMassFive. “By doubling the value of each gift card, we're helping shoppers give more, support local businesses, and spread a little extra holiday cheer.”

The Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce invites all community members to join in this special event

and help strengthen the local economy while securing the perfect holiday gift for friends and family.

For more information, including a list of participating businesses, please visit www.amherstarea.com/gift-card or contact the Chamber office at 413-253-0700.

About the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce:

The mission of the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce is to create, maintain, and promote a vital, thriving business climate throughout the Amherst area and to initiate and support the civic, educational, recreational, and economic well-being of the Amherst Area. Serving the towns of Amherst, Belchertown, Hadley,

Leverett, Pelham, Shutesbury, and Sunderland.

About UMassFive College Credit Union:

Established in 1967, UMassFive College Credit Union (UMassFive) is a not-for-profit financial cooperative that serves the financial needs of the people and businesses of the Pioneer Valley and beyond, including those associated with the University of Massachusetts and Five Colleges, Mercy Medical Center, Northampton VA Medical Center, UMass Chan Medical School, and other local organizations that share UMassFive's commitment to community-focused values and a sustainable local economy. The Credit Union's earnings are reinvested back to their members through better rates, lower service charges, and improved services and banking technology. UMassFive offers a full range of financial products, including personal and business banking and lending, retirement planning and investments, and insurance. UMassFive has over 50,700 members, six branches, and assets of over \$703 million. For more information about UMassFive, please visit umassfive.coop.

Church hosts raffle for Patriots Game

GRANBY – Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Granby is having a “Win a Trip to a Patriots Game with Fr. Michael Goodreau” Raffle for the January 4 game against the Miami Dolphins. The Winner will receive two 50-yard line seats, free access to the climate-controlled GP Atrium with free food and free non-alcoholic beverages (before, during, and after the game), and free transportation to and from the game.

Raffle tickets are \$20 and are available at our Parish Office (413-467-9821) and after all weekend Masses. Drawing is on December 29. All raffle profits will be used to help pay our Oil & Snow Removal bills this winter.



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Jarett Skowyra takes the return toward the right sideline.

Field goal makes difference for Orioles

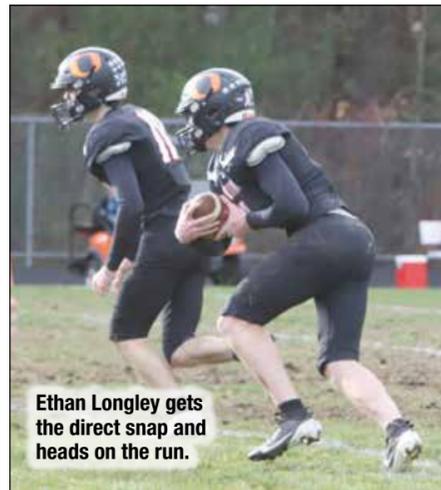


Trevor Alexander makes a carry for the Pioneers.

BELCHERTOWN – On a windy and cold Thanksgiving morning, a field goal from Belchertown’s Leandro Martins made the difference for the Orioles in a 17-14 win over Pathfinder. With Belchertown up 7-6 in the second quarter, Martins sent home a field goal to make the score 10-6. Both teams would score an additional touchdown later in the game, but the field goal remained the difference that helped the Orioles earn the holiday win.



Cassian Kowalik lumbers through the crowd on a carry.



Ethan Longley gets the direct snap and heads on the run.



The Pathfinder defense comes up with a big stop.



The Belchertown defense looks for a tackle.



Dustin Braid looks to make a tackle.



Aiden Girard makes a great block.



Avery Cote heads toward the left on a carry.



Leandro Martins sends a successful field goal kick away.



Coleman Longley takes the snap heads toward the right on a quarterback keeper.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Rams suffer OT loss in state semis

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD— As an eighth grader, Hannah Murphy recorded a hat-trick and had an assist helping the Monson girls’ soccer team post an 8-2 victory over Granby in the Western Mass. Class D semifinals.

Murphy and her Lady Mustangs teammates also swept the season series against the Lady Rams during the next three seasons.

The tide turned this fall, as Granby squeaked out a pair one-goal victories against Monson during the regular season.

The third meeting of the 2025 campaign between the Central Division rivals took place in Division 5 state semifinals.

Murphy, who broke the state record for goals during the regular season, managed to keep her outstanding high school soccer career alive

for one more match. She netted the game-winning goal with 2:32 remaining in the second overtime, giving the fourth-seeded Lady Mustangs a 2-1 victory over the top-seeded Lady Rams on a windy and cold evening at Clark Field located on the West Springfield High School campus on Nov. 17.

“I just told Hannah that she was the best player on the field tonight,” said Monson head coach Larry Pagliaro. “It was an unbelievable goal by her in overtime. We’re now looking forward to playing one final game in the state finals.”

Monson (12-10-1) was scheduled to face third-seeded Hull in the state finals at Curry College in Milton, last Saturday afternoon. The Lady Mustangs advanced into the state semifinals following home victories against 29th-seeded Franklin County Tech (4-0), 13th-seeded Holbrook (7-0)



Brenna Moreno heads toward the right side.

and fifth-seeded Saint John Paul II (5-3).

Granby finished their outstanding season with a 15-4-4 record.

“We beat Monson twice during the regular season, but the game that really mattered was this one,” said Granby head coach Bob Weaver. “It’s

a frustrating loss because you never know if you’ll ever make it back here again. We had a great season.”

The Lady Rams defeated 32nd-seeded Mahar Regional (2-0), 17th-seeded West Boylston (8-1), and the ninth-seeded Rising Tide Charter School (3-0) in the



Margaret Healey looks to get through midfield traffic.

state tournament.

While Murphy is the only senior listed on the Lady Mustangs roster, the three Lady Rams seniors are Kaitlyn Curran, Mylin Laliberte, and Ava Elizabeth Loughman, who’s recovering from an ACL injury. She’s hoping to play lacrosse next

spring.

One of the Lady Rams younger players is junior Kalli White, who has more than 100 career points.

During the first 30 minutes of the opening half, White and freshman Marcela Tapia

Please see **RAMS**, page 10

SPORTS

MIAA sets deadlines for finalized schedules

FRANKLIN – The 2025 Schedule Commitment Deadline and Process Reminder that the MIAA winter schedule commitment deadline is Friday, Dec. 19 for basketball and ice hockey. After that point, no changes can be made to your opponents or the number of games/matches that can be played.

After the Dec. 19 commitment deadline, all schedules will be considered final.

Three days before the Schedule Commitment deadline, MIAA staff will produce and publish schedules for each sport based on the available data for review and verification by member schools. Below is the breakdown for 2025-26 school year:

WINTER 2025-2026

- First contest date: Thursday, Dec. 11
- Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, Dec. 16
- Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, Dec. 19

SPRING 2026

- First contest date: Thursday, Mar. 26 (Monday, March 23 for Spring Golf)
- Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, Mar. 31
- Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, Apr. 3

Students chosen for sports ambassador program

WOBURN – The Massachusetts Amateur Sports Foundation / Bay State Games is proud to announce the 80 selected high school student-athletes who have been chosen to serve as Ambassadors for the 2025-2026 academic year.

These student leaders were selected from schools and communities across Massachusetts based on their involvement in athletics, commitment to leadership, and desire to inspire future participation in the Bay State Games and statewide community sport initiatives.

The Ambassador Program provides leadership development, event experience, and networking opportunities while ambassadors serve as representatives of Bay State Games in their schools, on their teams, and in their communities. Ambassadors play a key role in growing awareness, supporting recruitment efforts, and connecting their peers to the opportunities and events offered through Bay State Games including the Summer & Winter Games, scholarships, internships, and other year-round programs.

“The Ambassador Program helps expand statewide awareness and

impact of Bay State Games programs while mentoring high school students on the career and education opportunities available in the world of sports” said Kevin Cummings, Bay State Games Executive Director.

The 2025-2026 Ambassador program kicked off on November 2 with a statewide Ambassador Summit at the Natick Armory, hosted by the Massachusetts Army National Guard. Ambassadors from across the state participated in the program that included a fitness warm up and team building exercises, a panel discussion on the college athletic recruiting process and an address from motivational speaker, philanthropist, athlete and race director Dave McGillivray.

The Ambassador term began in October 2025 and runs through July 2026.

Among local student-athletes selected, Makenzie Casey of Quabbin Regional, Kendall Placzek and Richard Hale of Minnechaug Regional, Logan Millet of Ware, and Madelyn Moreau of Monson.

T-Birds fall in shootout against Islanders

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (5-10-2) caught an unfortunate break on a late game-tying goal in regulation before falling, 3-2, in a shootout to the Bridgeport Islanders (7-10-1) before a sellout crowd inside the MassMutual Center on Saturday night.

For a second straight night, the Islanders' first period excellence came to the forefront, and the visitors picked up the lone goal in the first on a weird and painful sequence. Forward Eetu Liukas was in the wrong place at the wrong time when a Sean Day point shot struck him under the visor, forcing him down to the ice injured. As Liukas lay near the crease, Liam Foudy arrived at the loose puck and fired it off the post behind Georgi Romanov. However, Liukas turned out to be in the right place as the puck glanced off the iron, then off his leg, before finding its way across the line at 13:16 for the first goal of the game.

Henrik Tikkanen made his season debut in the Bridgeport goal crease and proved to be tough to beat through the first half of the

game, but Springfield's shorthanded group finally solved the tall Finn at 9:49 of the second as Hugh McGing moved down the left wing and fired a sneaky, short-side shot past the netminder, tying the game, 1-1, on the T-Birds' second shorthanded goal in as many days.

Romanov kept his game elevated throughout a busy second period, as he successfully turned away all 14 Bridgeport shot attempts to keep his team deadlocked heading into the final period. The tight checking continued in the final period, with Springfield's forecheck continuing to work over the Islander defense. Eventually, they broke through at 9:55 of the third with Juraj Pekarcik finding his way to the low slot and firing a shot upstairs past Tikkanen, giving Springfield the 2-1 advantage.

The T-Birds' power play missed a chance to add insurance, and the one-goal margin carried into the final two minutes. With Tikkanen on his way to the bench for an extra attacker, Luke Rowe uncorked a blistering slapper from the left point that

glanced off the underside of the crossbar, beating Romanov to tie the game, 2-2, at 18:11. For the second time this month, the division rivals went to overtime.

Springfield carried much of the play in overtime, but Tikkanen answered with five stops, and the T-Birds failed to strike on a 4-on-3 advantage in the last 1:31 of overtime after Rowe committed a tripping infraction.

With the game coming down to a shootout, Matt Luff got Springfield off on the right foot, beating Tikkanen to begin the festivities, but Chris Terry and Matt Maggio both connected against Romanov, while Matthew Peca and Nikita Alexandrov could not solve Tikkanen. Springfield, despite the bitter defeat, extended its point streak to five straight games, going 3-0-1-1 over that stretch.

The T-Birds are back in action next Friday in Hartford for another meeting with the Wolf Pack inside PeoplesBank Arena. Puck drop is set for 7 p.m. to begin the three-game weekend.

Owls win tip-off tourney

WESTFIELD – Westfield State University senior guard Tavi Williams (Springfield, Mass. / Minnechaug HS) scored 12 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in the championship game to lead the Owls to a 75-66 win over Albright (Pa.) College to win the 2025 Westfield Gas and Electric Tip Off Tournament at the Woodward Center on Saturday afternoon.

Williams was named as the tournament MVP.

The Owls improve to 4-1 on the season, while Albright is now 1-4.

Williams was one of five Owls players to score in double-figures. Mya Silveira (N. Smithfield, RI) tied her for the team lead with 12 points, Morgan Berthiaume (Webster, Mass./Douglas) netted 11 points with eight steals, six assists and four rebounds, Grace Wigington (Lenox, Mass./IMG Academy) scored 10 points and Sophia Rockwood (Windsor, Vt.) also added 10.

Williams helped the Owls jump out to a lead that extended to as many as 16 points on a Williams 3-pointer with 5:02 left in the first half, with Westfield holding a 43-32 lead at halftime.

In the fourth quarter Albright ground away at the Owls lead, trimming it to as few as four, 68-64 on a Julia Zakovitch jumper in the paint with 4:03 left in the game. Westfield struggled to score late,

but boosted the lead back to six, 70-64 on a steal by Berthiaume and layup from Wigington with 1:44 left and the Lions were forced to foul down the stretch. Westfield canned five of six free throws in the final two minutes to seal the win.

Chrisdin Jones (Bowie, Md./Riverdale Baptist) led Albright with 20 points and 14 rebounds. 6-2 center Orianna Edmond (Lancaster, Pa./Hempfield) added 16 points and eight boards.

Westfield forced 38 turnovers from the Lions, and were plus-13 in the turnover game. The Owls connected on 10 of 38 three pointers, with more made three point field goals than in their previous two games combined.

Williams' 18 rebounds were a career high for the 5-4 guard. She grabbed 17 in a game against Coast Guard as a first-year player in the 2022-23 season. It was the fourth game this season with double-figure rebounds for Williams, who is averaging 12.6 boards per game.

Westfield avenged an 89-74 loss at Albright from last season. The Pennsylvania school was a late addition to the Owls' schedule in 2024-25 when they lost several games from the schedule just before the season began. The Lions returned the favor of the long trip by coming to the Westfield Gas and Electric Tip Off Tournament this season.



Kaitlyn Curran makes a throw-in.



Meredith Bartosz makes a save.



Kalli White advances toward the Monson goal.

RAMS from page 9

had a couple of shot attempts for the Lady Rams.

However, the contest remained scoreless until the 31st minute.

That's when Murphy blasted a free kick from the top of the box into the upper right corner of the net past Granby junior goalie Meredith Bartosz, who made four saves.

At the end of the regular season, Murphy was selected to the All-New England All-Star team.

The other four Western Mass. All New England players are Mila Dillard (Pope

Francis), Maeve Turmel (Pope Francis), Gracie DiStefano (Longmeadow High School), and Rhaya Manning (Longmeadow High School).

The Lady Mustangs held onto the 1-0 lead for almost the entire second half.

With a little more than six minutes remaining in regulation, Granby sophomore Kaelyn Slapski delivered a forward pass to White, who beat a couple of defenders for the ball before firing a low shot into the right corner past Monson sophomore goalie Grace Berry (11 saves).

“We never felt like we were out of the game,”



Marcela Tapia tries to make a play on the ball.



Eleanor Szlosek looks to overcome an opponent.

Weaver said. “We had a lot of chances in the first half, but we just didn't finish them. We continued putting pressure on them in the second half.”

White was selected to the Class D All-State team for the second consecutive year. Bartosz was also named to the All-State team.

Neither team was able to score a goal during the final five minutes of regulation or in the first 10-minute overtime period.

Just when it looked like the outcome of the match would be decided in a penal-

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Eleanor Szlosek looks to overcome an opponent.

ty shootout, Murphy, who'll be playing college soccer at Sacred Heart University, became the hero late in the second OT.

Following a throw-in along the left sideline, Murphy dribbled the ball into the box before poking a shot into the back of the net for the game winning goal.

When the two rivals face each other again next fall, the Lady Rams defense won't have to worry about one of the best girls' high school soccer players in the state scoring anymore goals against them.

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OBITUARIES

Michael “Mike” J. Nobes

Michael “Mike” J. Nobes, a beloved husband, father, Poppy, and brother, was born on December 25, 1955, in Mesa, Arizona. He passed away on November 24, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones at Baystate Medical Center.

At the age of 11 (1966), Mike and his family moved to South Hadley, MA, where he grew up. He spent the last thirty-six years of his life in Belchertown, MA, where he became an integral part of the Belchertown community.

He took great pride in his role as a soccer coach for his children’s teams and served as the president of the former PVJSL Cold Spring Soccer Club. His commitment to nurturing the talents of young athletes left a lasting impression on many families in the area. Off the field, he was pas-

sionate about his work at Global Finishing Solutions (GFS), where he excelled in sales, design, and engineering in industrial coating equipment. His clients and coworkers became some of his closest friends.

In his leisure time, Mike loved camping with family near the best roller coasters and waterfalls while creating lasting memories. He had a soft spot for his loyal dogs, Peggy & Buffy, who provided comfort and companionship throughout his life. Above all, Mike deeply cherished his family.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Dianne (Jolivet) Nobes; his son, Chris, and his wife Katie Nobes; and his daughter, Sara Nobes. He found immense joy in being a grandfather; affectionately known as “Poppy” to his grandchildren, Isla (3.5

years old) and Noah (13 months old). Mike was also a loving brother to his sisters, Karen Washburn and Janet Lipscomb, his late brother, William Nobes, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jack and Beverly (Lunde) Nobes, and his brother, William Nobes.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, December 6, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Beers & Story Belchertown Funeral Home in Belchertown, MA, with a service beginning at 11 a.m. Following the service, he will be laid to rest at St. Rose De Lima Cemetery in Chicopee, MA. Condolences can be made in Mike’s memory to the “Tunnel to Towers Foundation” as a tribute to our military and his veteran father, Jack Nobes.

Raymond Anthony Danek 

Raymond Anthony Danek died October 23, 2025 unexpectedly in his home in Mastic Beach, NY, after a lengthy struggle with Cardiovascular Disease and COPD.



Raymond was born on December 18, 1953, in Holyoke to Chester and Dolores Danek of Granby. He attended Granby Schools, and while at Granby Jr./Sr. High School he was a member of the wrestling team and will be remembered for designing, sketching, and painting Granby’s Mascot, “The Ram,” which to this day hangs in the school gymnasium. Ray graduated from high school in 1971 and later graduated with an associate’s degree in graphic design and arts at SUNY. He owned his own business, RAD Design in New York. Ray was also a veteran, having served in the U.S. Navy.

mother, Dolores Zuchowski Danek, his brother Chester Danek Jr., and his infant sister, Dolores Ann Danek.

Ray is survived by his father, Chester E. Danek of Granby, MA, his four daughters, Kely Antuzzi and her husband, Nina of Huntington, NY, Sara Danek of Savannah, GA, Allison Danek of Mattituck, NY, and Katie D’Amico of NY. Ray is also survived by his sisters, Frances Couture and her husband, Roger, of Mooresville, NC, and Teresa Danek Meyer of Brewster, MA. His brothers Mark Danek of Lexington, NC, and John Danek and his wife Tere of Holyoke. Ray also leaves his grandchildren, Travis and Lillie Danek, and Kaila D’Amico, and several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Funeral services were private, and a memorial service will be at a later date.

Ray is predeceased by his

Death Notices

Raymond Anthony Danek
Died Oc. 23, 2025
Funeral services private, memorial services to be announced

Michael “Mike” J. Nobes
Died Nov. 24, 2025
Services Belchertown Beers and Story Funeral Home

The Sentinel
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice 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.

How to spot and avoid job scams this holiday season

Retailers and shippers traditionally hire seasonal workers to fulfill holiday shoppers’ demands, whether online or in person.

These jobs are a great way to make extra money, sometimes with the possibility of turning into a long-term employment opportunity. However, they are sometimes not all that they seem.

When looking for seasonal work to help fund holiday purchases and household bills, the Better Business Bureau has some suggestions to make the seasonal job hunt successful. According to the BBB Scam Tracker Risk Report, employment scams were the second riskiest in 2024.

Being proactive in finding the right opportunity is key, but be careful when a job just seems too good to be true.

Tips to avoid holiday job scams

Employers will never ask for payment up front for a job. Beware businesses that ask applicants to pay for job supplies, application, or training fees.

These expenses are the employer’s responsibility – and asking for money is a big red flag that something is wrong.

Be wary of job offers that don’t require an interview. Even during the peak hiring season, reputable companies prefer to talk to top job candidates before hiring them.

If a job offer is presented without an interview (on the phone or in person) or is offered only via the Internet, question the company’s hiring practices and do a little more digging.

Be wary of big money for small jobs. If an employer promises outrageously good wages for simple tasks such as reshipping packages, stuffing envelopes, or answering phones, this is a red flag. These too-good-to-be-true offers are an attempt to steal your personal information from a fake job application and can cause problems for you for a long time.

Never work for a company before they hire you. A legitimate company will not ask potential applicants to complete complex projects before making an official offer. Before beginning any work, request an offer letter or written confirmation of what the job entails, including an official start date and compensation details.

For more consumer tips, visit BBB.org.

Handbell holiday music is coming to town

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Community Handbell Choir will be performing this holiday season on Sunday, December 7, at Hope Methodist Church at the 10 a.m. service, Sunday, December 14, at the Belchertown United Church of Christ at the 10 a.m. service, and at Christopher Heights at 2 p.m. The Handbell Choir will also be performing on Tuesday, December 16, at 7 p.m. at the Clapp Memorial Library. Come join us and listen and learn about Belchertown’s handbells.



BIRDS from page 6

This month the Brimfield resident saw a Carolina wren flipping over leaves in his garden. He said, “We joined the ‘leave the leaves’ movement and don’t do a major fall cleanup to benefit the critters that survive the winter under the leave and in the other material left in the garden.”

He also noticed robins and cedar waxwings in the crab apple tree in his yard. He said, “We don’t usually see these species eating the crab apples until later in the winter. Fortunately there is a bumper crop of fruit on the trees this year. A couple of robins were also on the ground searching for food and I saw one robin at some pokeberry aka, pokeweed, eating the fruit. He has not seen any water fowl at the local ponds he visits regularly.”

Lots of bluebirds
I received an email from a

reader, who said his wife saw approximately 40 bluebirds on the causeway stonewall at Quabbin Reservoir.

Bald eagles

My daughter, Paula, took photos of a bald eagle in a field along the Ware River, on Church Street in Ware recently.

I saw a bald eagle perched in a tree on the shore of the Ware River not far from the Gilbertville line. It may have been the same eagle.

Migrating geese

I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a small, pond along Route 32 in Ware on Nov. 15. They covered over half the pond.

Helping birds

When it is time to take the Christmas tree down, place it outside to offer shelter to birds and other critters. Some people hang peanut butter filled pine cones rolled in birdseed or pieces of suet to provide some high energy

food. Planting evergreen trees especially spruce and firs are away to attract the golden-crowned kinglets and offer a living shelter year round.

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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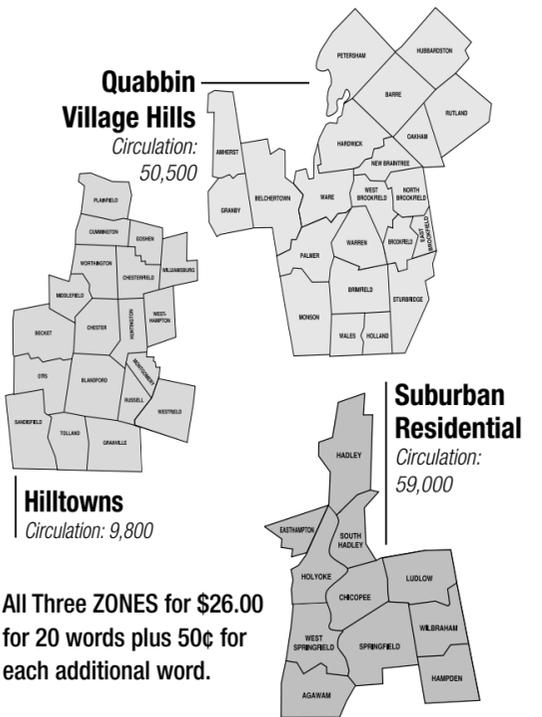
12 HOMETOWN NEWSPAPERS **413.283.8393** www.turley.com 24 Water Street Palmer, MA 01069

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WREATHS from page 1

to sponsor events and more.

4-H clubs are for kids between five and eighteen years old and work to teach the basic of home economics, which is what it was originally created for. Since then, it has expanded into clubs that do robotics, babysitting certifications, and more.

The wreath sales were priced according to what kinds of decorations the people wanted for their wreaths.

The people who came to the wreath sale bought all 180 wreaths from the troop and the club, selling out entirely in just five hours.

"The support of the community means a lot," said Janet Theroux. "It always amazes me how people come in and buy the wreaths every year, and we always sell out."

The immediate support of the community for the troop and the 4-H clubs are greatly appreciated, and they look forward to the new year for new opportunities and fun.

"(It's) the joy in people's faces when they see a beautiful wreath," said Thibault. "I grew up in this town and am so happy to continue to see new 4-H-ers taking an interest in all the clubs we have to offer. The community comes out to support us at every event, from this to Trunk or Treat, the 4-H fair tent, we are so grateful."



Scout Troop 507 and 4-H kids holding wreaths for sale on the common.



ABOVE: A line of people prepping the wreaths for sale, picking out beautiful décor pieces.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS



LEFT: Working hard to tie some beautiful bows with all colors and textures of ribbons for the wreaths.

PUBLIC NOTICE

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLE

This ad is pursuant to MA Gen. Law Ch.255, Sec. 39A as of December 19, 2025 the following motor vehicle will be for sale to satisfy a garage keepers lien:

Vehicle: 2009 Honda Odyssey
VIN: 5FNRL387X9B050498
Color: Blue
LKO: Aramis Ares
Address: 313 Maple Street
Springfield, MA 01105
Relentless Towing
Belchertown, MA
413-530-3804
12/04, 12/11, 12/18/2025

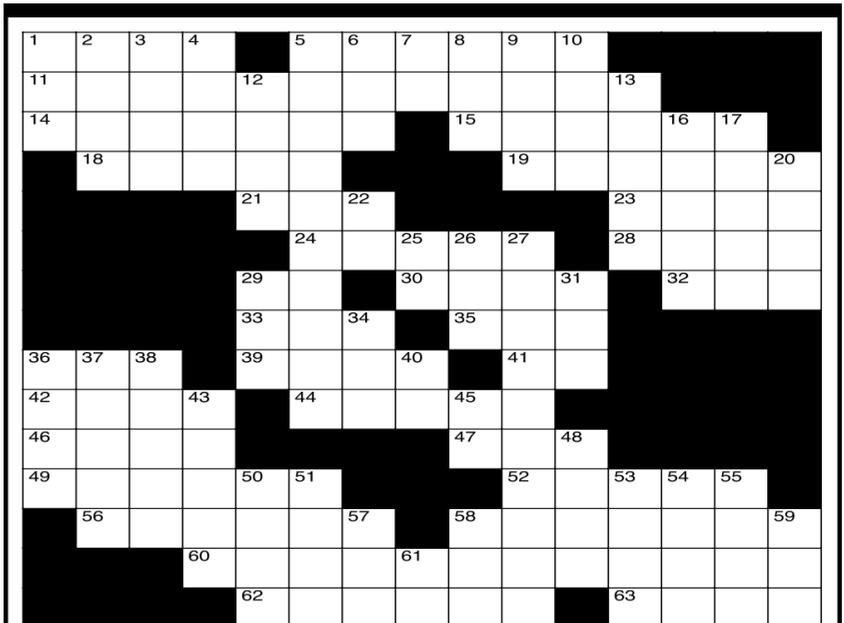
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Dough made from corn flour
- 5. Rise
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. A low wall
- 15. Kidnap
- 18. A cup golfers want to win
- 19. Outgoing
- 21. "Partner" to flow
- 23. Former Michigan coach Brady
- 24. Proverb
- 28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 29. Helps a body recover
- 30. Baseball Cy Young winner
- 32. Very fast airplane
- 33. Offensive baseball stat
- 35. Body of water

- 36. Record of one's heartbeat
- 39. Signs a contract
- 41. Atomic #24
- 42. Bind securely
- 44. French Jesuit theologian
- 46. Fragrant brown balsam
- 47. Post office box
- 49. Sells tickets at inflated prices
- 52. Places to hang coats
- 56. Jewish salutation
- 58. Yellow fruits
- 60. Poorly educated
- 62. Microorganism
- 63. Talk show host Barrymore

CLUES DOWN

- 1. A way to plan
- 2. Three-banded

- armadillo
- 3. Mobile
- 4. Romanian city
- 5. Making sour
- 6. Take a seat
- 7. "The Golden State"
- 8. When you hope to arrive
- 9. Pointed ends of pens
- 10. Extinct flightless bird
- 12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
- 13. Nape of neck
- 16. Problems (Spanish slang)
- 17. Narrow carpet
- 20. To avoid the risk of
- 22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)
- 25. Equally
- 26. Traditional cars still need it
- 27. Eligible voters
- 29. Greek alphabet letter

- 31. Body part
- 34. Referee-declared outcome
- 36. Means to moving money
- 37. Popular footwear brand
- 38. Cockatoo
- 40. NFL's big game
- 43. Botswana currencies
- 45. News-reporting organization
- 48. Batman villain
- 50. Urgent request
- 51. Not all
- 53. Hallmark's specialty
- 54. Knot in a tree
- 55. Satisfy
- 57. Notable space station
- 58. Baby's dining accessory
- 59. Stitch clothing
- 61. ___ and behold

EARLY DEADLINE
In observance of **CHRISTMAS** for Dec. 22-26 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!** Place your advertisement no later than **Thurs., Dec. 17 at 3 p.m.**
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Lexie Burke's handmade ceramic mugs are a perfect gift.



Katy Workman with her handmade items from her small business, Moonlit Honey Handmade Gifts.



Lori Chaffee's adorable Hot Cocoa Bar from her small business, Grazescape: A Culinary Experience.



Ann Burns with her adorable mushroom pottery pieces she hand made.



JenaRose Zawalski, and Fiona and Sam Stretton with their handmade items.

WINTER LIGHT NIGHT

LIGHTS from page 1

event features a vendor fair and a chance for people to explore and buy from local businesses, as Christmas gifts are on the minds of people all over.

Winter Light Night also features a gingerbread house contest, a horse-drawn carriage ride, and donated treats like kettle corn from Kettle and Pine in West Brookfield and maple cotton candy from Shattuck's Sugar House here in town.

"I love that this has become a tradition for our town. It's something that my family and I look forward to every year. My kids have been coming to Winter Light Night as long as they can remember. It means a lot to me to be able to help keep this tradition going," said Melanie Donovan, Chair of the Cultural Council.

The Belchertown Fire Association served hot chocolate with mix-ins, and the Belchertown Police began collecting donations for their annual toy drive.

Students from the high school helped run the s'mores station, back this year in consolidated and safe fire pits. There was also a luminaries station where people could come to the table and decorate a bag, add a candle, and watch it glow as the sun set and light up the Common.

"It's a lot of work behind the scenes. I don't know if folks realize how far in advance we have to start planning events like this. We've been working on Winter Light Night since the end of summer," said Donovan.

So much gets put into making sure the night is a success,

right down to the vendors that come in, filling both the St. Francis Parish Hall and the Old Town Hall with tables of treasures to choose from for gifts.

But what really shines on this night aren't so much the tree or the giant snowflakes or strings of warm yellow lights, but the different groups and organizations in town that help make events like these possible.

From the DPW helping set up the lights, to ReMax members Matt and Annmarie Jackson donating finds to cover free coffee for the whole night from Tom's Travelin' Coffee Truck, the Select Board and Board of Health ensuring that everything is in order, and the police and fire department keeping everyone safe and having smiles all around, everyone makes a difference.

"And that's one of the things that I love about Belchertown, we have a community that always gives back," said Donovan. "Winter Light Night could not happen without the support of our local businesses, who sponsored all the activities and stations on the common, and our amazing group of volunteers who spent hours putting it all together and then cleaning up afterwards."

The community truly comes together on this day every year, and it has become a wonderful tradition for the residents of Belchertown, as they come to not only see their tree light up, but also each other, despite the temperature being in the twenties and the cocoa going cold in insulated cups.

"I was speaking to a resident a couple of weeks ago, and she mentioned how much she was looking forward to Winter Light Night. She said the first time she went, it felt like a Hallmark movie," said Donovan. "It almost doesn't seem possible to have an event this wholesome in real life. I am so thankful for and proud of the people who work with us to make this event happen"

And this evening is magic, indeed, as it sets the tone for the holiday season and what it truly means: gathering with your community, smiling, laughing, and giving back.



Erica Damon, a local author, and her books for sale.



The Shattucks handing out maple cotton candy made at Shattuck's Sugar House.



Members of the Belchertown Police and Fire Departments serving up some cocoa with Comfort Dog Oliver.



Corie Diehl, owner of Tom's Travelin' Coffee and Annmarie Jackson with ReMax.



Beautiful pieces made by Tania Grael.



Giana Mosen, Jocelyn Patten, and Racquel Pogoda running the s'mores station.