

Community Closet reopens *for people in need*

By Murphy Fitts
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – This past Sunday community members came together for a grand re-opening of Belchertown's Community Closet for a night of fun.

Families donated and looked through winter clothes and toys. They also ate pizza, fruit and veggies.

Children had access to puzzles, multiple fun crafts, and a story time lead by Librarian Jennifer Whitehead.

During the story time kids learned the ASL to the song The More We Get Together and sang the song together as well as participated in other interactive songs. They also read the book What!

Natasha Martin is the chair of the family center committee.

"It's really important because we want to make sure [our families in town] have access to quality winter gear for their kids," said Martin.



TURLEY PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MURPHY FITTS

ABOVE: Welcome to the grand re-opening of Belchertown's Community Closet. AT LEFT: Lila delights in playing with toys shared at the community closet.

Please see **COMMUNITY CLOSET**, page 9

Author inspired by town

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

BELCHERTOWN – Finding your passion is an essential part of learning to love and truly appreciate life, and for author Diane Leaf, she has found that passion to be in writing.

Drawing inspiration from Belchertown, her seven books are inspired by town, and cross three genres: children's, young adult, and science fiction and fantasy, drawing on the wonder of her hometown in many ways.

"The people and the opportunity to connect with nature. Belchertown has a small-town feel that I absolutely love-it's safe, beautiful, and full of quiet moments that spark creativity," said Leaf.

"While the characters in my Timewalker series are fictional, Belchertown and the Quabbin are indirectly woven into the storyline. Spoiler alert: there's a major reveal in Book 3, and that reveal becomes the focus of Book 4. The idea for The Seven Year Track came to me while I was driving past the playground and noticed the way the sunlight hit the trees and shrubs, forming what looked like a natural tunnel."

Leaf began her writing journey in 2010 and wrote on and off for the past 15 years until now, seven published books later, and a passion for writing she desires to share with her whole community.

"What I love most about writing is disconnecting from the day-to-day and diving into a

Please see **AUTHOR**, page 9

Triboard meeting hosts school regionalization consultants

By Melina Bourdeau
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN — Local officials and consultants gathered to discuss the potential for regionalizing Belchertown's school system, exploring educational, financial, and operational implications as declining enrollment and future planning pressed into the evening's agenda.

Town leaders, school committee members, and consultants from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools

(MARS) convened to provide clarity and engage in a wide-ranging dialogue about whether regionalization could serve the community's needs. The discussion covered the formation of planning committees, the complexities of shared governance, financial considerations, and the experience of other districts facing similar questions.

Attendees then heard introductory remarks and an agenda summary from Selectboard member Nicole Miner, who stated, "I think that this is purely fact find-

ing... if regionalization is a good fit for us or which direction we want to go in... We just want to understand from you what the steps are and the considerations."

Consultant Jay Barry introduced himself and set the scene for how regional school agreements function.

"A regional school district is its own... government organization and entity," he said. "It exists by itself. It can hire people, fire people,

Please see **MEETING**, page 2



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The Girl Scouts who came to help with the toys with Comfort Dog Oliver and Officer Draine Colon Rivera.

BPD hosts annual toy drive for kids in need

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN — The time has come again for the Belchertown Police Department to host their annual toy drive, and dozens of people came from all over town to drop off toys to be donated.

"Seeing our community room fill up with toys and knowing every single one of those gifts is headed straight to a child who might not otherwise have anything to open on Christmas morning.

We have been hosting the Toy Drive for approximately 12- 15 years. Every year it

gets a little bigger, and every year we get to help a few more kids," said Chief Kevin Pacunas.

The Girl Scouts came by to assist with unpacking trunks and organizing the toys by category into the police station.

"This tradition it's important to our department because we are supporting and serving our community beyond emergency responses. Events like stuff a cruiser allows officers and residents to connect in a positive manner, working side by side to make a difference," said Officer Draine Colon Rivera.

Please see **TOY DRIVE**, page 3

Police, firefighters collect toys for kids in need

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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GRANBY – For the first year ever, the Granby Public Safety members got together to host a special toy drive in the parking lot of the Public Safety Complex.

"This is our first drive ever, and due to the tremendous support we have received from the public, we certainly will make this an annual event going forward. As a great man once said, "it is better to give than to receive,"- and what can be better than giving to children in need during the holidays?" said Allan

Please see **TOYS FOR KIDS**, page 5



Spakry posing for a photo with two boys who stopped to donate.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



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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.

Boy Scout Troop 507 can, bottle drive December 13

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown Boy Scout Troop 507 is holding a Can & Bottle Drive on Saturday, December 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pride Gas Station at the intersection of Rt. 21 and Rt 202, 165 State Street. Gather up all of those unwanted returnable bottles and cans from your Thanksgiving gatherings and

help support the Boy Scouts of Belchertown. Returnable water bottles are also accepted. Bring them to the Pride station where the Scouts will be collecting them to raise money to help make their scouting experience more meaningful. If you have questions, please email BelchertownTroop507@gmail.com.

Agricultural Commission invites community to winter event

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Agricultural Commission invites all interested parties to our winter informational event on January 24, 2026, from 1 to 3 p.m. in the auditorium located at Lawrence Memorial Hall.

Presentation will be provided on the following topics. Mill Valley Veterinary Clinic will provide updates

on Livestock Health, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service will provide updates on their programs and services, as well as discuss climate change, and the Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) will provide information on their programs and services. Refreshments will be served.

Town hall holiday closures

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown Town Hall and the Select Board's Office at the Finnerty House will be closing at noon on Wednesday, December 24, 2025, for the holiday. Offices will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, December

29, 2025. Additionally, the Belchertown Town Hall and the Select Board's Office at the Finnerty House will be closing at noon on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, for the holiday. Offices will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, January 5, 2026.

Hello from the McPherson Garden Committee

BELCHERTOWN – Our fourth year was an interesting, difficult at times, garden season. Mother Nature threw everything at us. We were very lucky to have the Belchertown High School Girls Softball team do a spring clean-up. It was awesome. We hope they come back in 2026. Community Service at its best.

With the funds from the Community Preservation Grant and some funds left in our dwindling Gift Account, which comes from your donations and the support of our DPW, this is what we were able to accomplish.

Two new 8-foot-long wooden picnic tables, one accessible

The old picnic table was moved to a place in the trees for shade. This was made possible by "lots" of wood chips from the DPW

- 3 beautiful maple trees were planted outside the tall wall facing CHCS
- 3 unusual and interesting evergreens planted in the center of the old circular



A beautiful view of the McPherson Sensory Garden.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

- drive
- A polymer product was put between the stones in the original path to keep the crabgrass from growing there
- A raised bed to make planting, weeding, and just enjoying flowers accessible for all
- A magnolia tree was planted in the back by the "patio."

- We planted many more perennials out of our own pockets because we are so forgetful and lose our receipts
- Once again, Renate Robinson, our Dahlia Lady, donated dahlias that were spectacular
- We planted gladiolas for the first time and remembered to dig up the bulbs for next year

- We added sunflowers in the circular drive
 - And we mulched everything
- We hope that you continue to enjoy beautiful sunsets in the garden throughout the winter months and welcome the spring flowers with us.
- Wishing you happy days throughout the coming Holiday Season.

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.



Do you need sand? We have sand

BELCHERTOWN – With winter already making itself known after this week's snow and ice, residents are reminded that free winter sand is available for household use. The sand (no salt mix) is provided for Belchertown residents only; contractors are not permitted to take sand.

Sand may be picked up at the "Green Shed" locat-

ed at the DPW Highway Garage, 290 Jackson Street. Residents should bring their own bucket or container, along with a shovel, for loading the sand.

There is no fee for this service. For full details, visit the Town of Belchertown website or contact the Department of Public Works at 413-323-0415.

MEETING from page 1

pay people, borrow money, and enter into contracts, all of that on its own, without the member towns. It has its own organization, and the member towns are represented by their school can elect school committee representatives."

Barry underlined both the separation and partnership inherent to regionalization.

"It's very important that regional school districts, even though they are independent to some degree, very much keep in mind their members and keep them posted, keep them informed, let them know what's going on," he said. "And sometimes when communication isn't there, things don't go well."

One advantage to regionalization is additional state reimbursement for transportation. "Regional districts

receive reimbursement for their transportation... it really varies between about 60 and 80%... depending on how robust the state budget is. But

It's very important that regional school districts, even though they are independent to some degree, very much keep in mind their members and keep them posted, keep them informed, let them know what's going on."

JAY BARRY,
Consultant

that's a benefit that municipal districts, of course, don't have."

Financial complexity and governance differences were recurring themes.

Barry said a regional district is a little bit more independent in its structure and function.

School Committee member Ruby Bansal clarified the oversight in regional school

districts: "School committees are in charge of the school district pretty much, and they hire the superintendent. The operations of the Select Board are not in our chain of command," Bansal said.

Officials discussed how regionalization studies typically proceed, with Barry stating, "Usually there's some sort of exploratory work on the part of a working group or stakeholders to learn a little bit about regional districts and the regionalization process. Then, primarily to find a partner, you have to have somebody to dance with if you're going to do this... Then what would happen is both towns would work through their moderator and their Select Board... and they would appoint a regional school planning committee."

The timeline and expenses for a full study were outlined as substantial: "These studies take time, generally, more than a year," Barry said. "I can think of an example that was somewhere in the range of \$70,000 or 80,000... and the timeframe in one proj-

ect we did... that took three years."

On the academic front, concern for student outcomes and program breadth drove much of the dialogue for Selectboard Chair Lesa Lessard Pearson.

Yet, comprehensive data linking regionalization directly to improved outcomes appears limited. "You have to be very careful about promising that everything's going to get better," Barry said.

Debate continued over the merits and risks of regionalization.

"I've seen the financial projections; they come out pretty even. There isn't a huge financial benefit to doing this," Barry said. Other concerns included governance, the potential loss of local control, and complications of splitting assets if a regionalization failed.

As the meeting ended, participants agreed more information and community consensus was necessary before taking action.

"It's time that we form a committee," Select Board member Jon Ritter said. "It's open meetings to the public, and you get some public interest."

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Warm up this December at the library

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, Dec. 24, and remain closed on Thursday, Dec. 25. Regular hours resume Friday, December 26.

For General Audiences: Belchertown Community Bells Choir

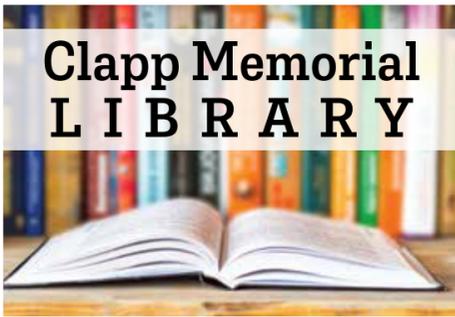
Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7 to 8 p.m.
Join the Belchertown Community Bells Choir for a free concert at the Clapp Memorial Library. The Choir have been playing and presenting concerts for nearly 40 years. This volunteer musical group is led by Bill McClure and plays several different styles of music from religious to pop. They enjoy ringing, rehearsing, and sharing their music with others in the community.

Community Wellness

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

Thursday, Dec. 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 ruler



ing god of Poros. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Adult Winter Reading Program

Dec. 20, 2025 - Feb. 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: Free Food Friday

Friday, Dec. 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

Dec. 20, 2025 - Feb. 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, Dec. 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 Jan. 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 Dec. 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/sto

Please see **LIBRARY**, page 8

Belchertown celebrates Hanukkah

BELCHERTOWN – Come and celebrate the first night of Hanukkah with a community menorah lighting. Play dreidel with friends and family and eat some yummy nosh. Listen to the story of Hanukkah and bring a menorah to light- we have extra candles. The Hanukkah celebration will take place on

Sunday, Dec. 14, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the Belchertown Recreation Department, 66 State Street. Come and join in the fun.



Dozens of science and craft toys, board games, and puzzles to be enjoyed.

TOY DRIVE from page 1

Once all the toys are collected, a member of the community, the mysterious Santa's Elf, comes by to make sure that each of the gifts is personally delivered to the kids in town who need the toys the most.

Baby toys, dolls, baby dolls, trucks, puzzles, board games, cars, action figures, stuffed animals, blocks and Legos, and so much more were donated so that there was something for every child from preschool to middle school.

“The outpouring of support we receive for our Toy Drive is nothing short of amazing. None of this would be possible without



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Officers helping to unload a trunk of toys.

the incredible generosity of our community, we can not thank everyone enough,” said Chief Pacunas.

The Toy Drive was a great success, and provided a way

for the police to reach out to the community and provide some toys, and for the community to help each other this holiday season.

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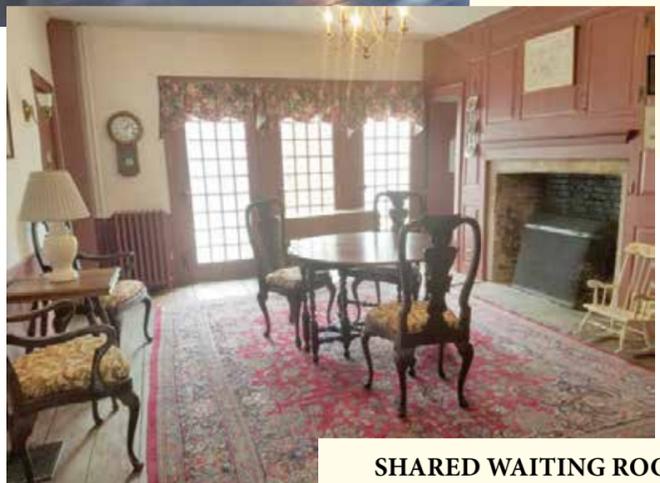
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Belchertown awarded \$345K in state grants

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
- \$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

to help strengthen our local businesses and attract more visitors.

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.

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.

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 Nov. 21 through Dec. 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, Nov. 22

5:50 p.m. – A 15-year-old Springfield male was issued a summons for charges of possession of alcohol under 21 and a 15-year-old Belchertown male was issued a summons for charges of shoplifting. An officer responded to a business regarding a person under 21 who stole alcohol. While responding, the officer was updated that two people were involved in the incident. The officers saw the two people by the parking lot and identified them. The two were trespassed from the property and the people's parents were contacted. The School Resource Officer was alerted of the matter.

Sunday, Nov. 23

7:41 a.m. – A person was arrested for an abuse prevention order violation.
9:25 a.m. – Officers police assisted Ware Police with an arrest for a 209A violation.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Saturday, Nov. 22

8:57 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Federal Street and George Hannum Road. A vehicle traveling on Federal Street stopped at the stop light. A second vehicle rear ended

the first vehicle. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

Sunday, Nov. 23

10:04 a.m. – An officer spoke with a person about someone they thought could be missing because they hadn't heard from them. The person was entered as missing.

5:04 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on North Liberty Street. A vehicle was traveling north on North Liberty Street when a bear ran into the roadway. The vehicle struck the bear and there was damage to the front right side of the vehicle, which was towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

7:23 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Jackson Street. A vehicle traveling east on Jackson Street struck a deer that ran into the roadway. There was damage to the center front of the vehicle. The deer died. No injuries no tows. The plate fell off and an officer was able to return it.

Monday, Nov. 24

10:50 a.m. – An officer took a report of check fraud. A person mailed a check to pay a bill and then when they realized the bill wasn't paid, it was discovered the check was altered. The resident was told to contact their bank and the postal service.

1:01 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Main Street. A vehicle traveling north on Main Street stopped to turn left onto Central Street. A second vehicle tried to pass the first on the right side and struck the left side of the first vehicle. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

Tuesday, Nov. 25

10:51 a.m. – An officer took a report of fraud.

A person got an email that was ready to be shipped. They said they didn't place an order and contacted the retailer who said it was shipped and noted the purchase was fraudulent. The person cancelled the card to get a new one.

6:29 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Chauncey Walker Road. A vehicle traveling north on Chauncey Walker Road struck a deer that ran into roadway. No injuries were reported and no tows were needed.

6:29 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Bay Road. Two vehicles going east on Bay Road stopped at the stop sign. One vehicle moved forward and then was struck by the second vehicle in the rear. No tows were needed and no injuries were reported.

10:04 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident. A vehicle backing out of a space at a business struck a second vehicle. There was damage to the right side. It was reported after the accident occurred. Statements were taken by both people.

10:55 p.m. – An officer spoke with people in the lobby about relationship issues.

Wednesday, Nov. 26

7:45 a.m. – An officer responded Chauncey Walker Road and Bardwell Street near the Ludlow line. Ludlow Police were contacted to block the road. A vehicle struck a tractor trailer unit. The roadway was impassable. One vehicle's occupant was transported from the scene.

Friday, Nov. 28

9:48 p.m. – An officer responded to assist Belchertown Fire paramedics.

Saturday, Nov. 29

9:39 a.m. – A person dropped off a bag they found in the woods. It appeared as though it was outside for many seasons. It was covered in dirt and moss. The officers found a wallet and license. The officers tried to contact the person, and the wallet was placed into property.

2:03 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Turkey Hill Road. A vehicle stopped at the traffic light on Turkey Hill Road was rear ended by a second vehicle. Both vehicles were towed from the scene. No injuries were reported.

2:49 p.m. – An officer took a debit card and a winter hat from a person who dropped them off after finding them in while hiking. The property was entered into evidence.

9 p.m. – An officer to Amherst line for a courtesy transport. The officer located a wallet during the transport. They went to the address, and no one was home and the officer also tried to contact the person but couldn't reach them.

Sunday, Nov. 30

7:15 p.m. – An officer responded to a residence to help someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

11:15 p.m. – An officer responded to a report of a fallen tree. The officer responded to Poole Road for a report of a fallen tree across a roadway and on a residence. The tree landed in the yard, struck a vehicle and the home. The homeowner was identified. National Grid was contacted.

Monday, Dec. 1

4:16 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident. A vehicle traveling east on Allen Road drifted off the roadway, sideswiping a pole. There was damage to the left side and front of the vehi-

cle. Images were taken of the accident. No injuries were reported and no rows were needed.

Tuesday, Dec. 2

2:25 a.m. – An officer took a report of fraud. A package was delivered to a residence, but the contents of the package were not there. The resident said they contacted the retailer and they requested copy of the police report.

10:11 a.m. – An officer responded to an accident on George Hannum Road. A vehicle traveling east on George Hannum Road toward the underpass struck another vehicle heading in the opposite direction. The cars struck the underpass. No tows were needed and no injuries were reported.

12:58 p.m. – There was an accident around 625 State Street.

2:03 p.m. – An officer responded to an accident on Turkey Hill Road. A vehicle on Turkey Hill Road lost control, sliding into a guard-rail. No tows were needed and no injuries were reported.

Wednesday, Dec. 3

2:18 p.m. – An officer took a report about a missing person and the person has memory issues.

Thursday, Dec. 4

10:03 a.m. – A resident reported a possible past breaking and entering they were away from the apartment and believed someone entered and took various medications and other items.

Granby Police Log

Editor's Note: The Granby Police Department responded to 121 calls for the week of Nov. 18 through Dec. 5. Those arrested are presumed

innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. The Granby Police Department provides all information.

Friday, Nov. 28

1:26 a.m. – A motorist reported striking a deer. There were no injuries.

Sunday, Nov. 30

12:34 p.m. – An Amazon delivery driver reported being bitten by a dog while delivering items to a residence. Granby ambulance responded and provided treatment for a minor injury.

Monday, Dec. 1

3:52 a.m. – A motorist reported that a bread delivery truck slid off the road and struck a tree. Granby Police and Fire responded. There were no injuries.

4:47 p.m. – A motorist reported striking a deer. There were no injuries.

7:08 p.m. – While on patrol, an officer observed a motor vehicle fail to stop for a stop sign. The vehicle was stopped and it was discovered that the operator had a suspended MA driver's license. The operator was issued a criminal citation.

Wednesday, Dec. 3

11:57 a.m. – A resident came to the station to report their someone tried taking money from their accounts. An incident report was completed.

2:34 p.m. – A resident reported that they received a message stating their Apple account was charged \$143. However, they do not have an Apple account. They were advised to delete it the message since it was scam.

Thursday, Dec. 4

11:22 a.m. – A motorist reported a that a delivery driver struck her garage door at a low speed. There were no injuries.

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Tips for navigating the Holidays while grieving

By Rev. Peter-Michael Preble

The holiday season is often described as a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness. But for many people, this time of year also brings an immense sense of grief, loneliness, and longing. When someone we love is missing from the table, the lights seem a little dimmer, and the familiar traditions feel different. If you are grieving this year, you are not alone. There are ways to move gently through the season and even find moments of peace amid sorrow.

Permit Yourself to Feel What You Feel

The pressure to be “festive” can be overwhelming, especially when you are grieving. It is okay, more than okay, to feel sad, tired, or disconnected. You have endured a loss. Grief doesn’t follow a schedule, and it cannot be pushed aside for the sake of holiday cheer. Let go of the expectations you place on yourself and the expecta-

tions others may have of you. Allow your emotions to come and go as they need to.

Adjust Traditions Instead of Erasing Them

Traditions can bring comfort, but they can also stir deep pain. You are allowed to decide which ones you want to keep, which ones you want to set aside, and which ones you might choose to reinvent. You might find meaning in continuing a loved one’s favorite ritual. Or it may feel right to pause it for a year. You may even begin something new that honors their memory. Remember: if you do something twice, it becomes a tradition.

Set Boundaries with Events and People

Boundaries are essential when grieving. You do not have to attend every gathering or celebration. Give yourself permission to say no without guilt. If you do choose to go, you may leave early or step outside for a moment of quiet if needed. Your wellbeing matters,

and it is okay to protect your energy.

Plan for the Hard Moments

Difficult moments will come, but planning for them can help. Identify the days or events that may feel especially heavy and create a gentle plan for how to navigate them. Have someone you trust available to check in with you. Step outside for a walk. Find a quiet place to pray or meditate. Often, the anticipation of the day is harder than the day itself, so prepare, but don’t overprepare.

Accept Help—Practical and Emotional

Many grieving people struggle to ask for help, especially if they are used to being the helper. But you do not need to carry everything by yourself. If you usually host a holiday gathering, ask someone else to take the lead this year. Let others support you with meals, rides, company, or simply their presence. Isolation can intensify grief; staying connected, even

in small ways, can ease the burden.

Create Space to Remember

Remembering your loved one can be healing. Share stories, look through photos, prepare their favorite dish, or set a place at the table in their honor. Some find comfort in lighting a candle or displaying a picture. But if remembering feels too painful right now, you can set it aside. There is no right or wrong way to honor memory.

Care for Your Body and Nervous System

Grief is exhausting, emotionally and physically. Pay attention to your body’s needs: drink water, eat nourishing food, rest when you can. Gentle movement, like stretching or walking, can help calm your nervous system. Listen to what your body is telling you; it often knows what you need before your mind does.

Please see **HOLIDAYS**, page 11

TOYS FOR KIDS from page 1

Brooks, President of the Granby Police Association. The Police and Fire Associations came together with Sparky to set up a tent, and open up their cruisers to load the toys into, and donate them to be distributed to both Granby to Go and Neighbors Helping Neighbors, who are working to ensure that every child receives a toy this Christmas, no matter their situation.

“I am very appreciative of their help in finding homes for all these toys. The huge amount of support we got during the drive speaks to why we love working for our community- when the people eagerly come out to help hand in hand with us we know that there is a feeling of mutual appreciation and



Members of the Granby Police and Fire Departments set up and ready to collect toys.

friendship,” said Brooks.

The community came out in droves to donate, and the trunks of the cruisers were filled to the brim and over-

flowing of toys for these children in need.

“The Police and Fire Associations teaming up with the public to help others, particularly children, is both rewarding personally to the participants and greatly appreciated by the recipients of these generous gifts,” said Brooks. “As public servants this is the highest endorsement we can get- the love of the people we serve!”

The first year was a great success, and helped provided

dozens of toys from bikes to Legos and dolls and stuffed animals. The support and generosity of the community was truly felt at the Public Safety Complex over the weekend.

“To be frank, this beyond expectation abundance of toys received for our first annual toy drive is perhaps now my fondest Christmas memory! Thank you all for your help and generosity! I look forward to next year,” said Brooks.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Here comes Santa's helper with a bag of toys.

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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

About tax filing status and Medicare

Dear Rusty:

I'm trying to figure out if I should change my IRS filing status to "Married - Filing Jointly" prior to getting reviewed for my Medicare Part B and Part D.

My current IRS status is "Married - Filing Single" and I noticed this filing status is more stringent. I will be turning 62 this year (2025) and I've read that Medicare will review my income two years prior to turning 65. Any input would be appreciated.

Signed: Uncertain Senior

Dear Uncertain:

Your IRS tax filing status has no bearing on your eligibility for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient healthcare services) or Medicare Part D (insurance coverage for prescription drugs). Medicare is an individual healthcare program, so enrolling in Medicare provides coverage for you only, not your spouse, your spouse's Medicare eligibility will be individually evaluated.

What your IRS filing status may affect is the amount of your Medicare Part B and Part D premiums. There is a Medicare provision called Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, which sets the income thresholds on which your Medicare premiums are based and those thresholds are different if you file your income tax as a single or as "married/filing jointly."

The IRMAA thresholds can change annually and there's no way to yet determine what they will be when you are able to enroll in Medicare at age 65. They are currently \$106,000 if you file as a single, and \$212,000 if you file your taxes as "married/jointly." If your "provisional income," your combined income from all sources, exceeds the threshold for your filing status, you will pay higher than standard Medicare Part B and Part D premiums. If your income is lower than the threshold, you will pay only whatever the standard Medicare Part B premium is for the year you start Medicare and there will be no supplemental premium for your Part D coverage.

For information, the IRMAA supplements are progressive that is, the more you exceed the threshold by, the higher your IRMAA premium supplement will be. To see the current IRMAA thresholds and supplements again, these will likely change when you are eligible for Medicare visit www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-

sheets/2025-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles.

You are correct that your Medicare premium, when you enroll, will be determined by your total income from two years prior. So, if you plan to enroll in Medicare at age 65, sometime in 2028, it is your 2026 income which will determine your Part B and Part D premiums, and that income will be defined by your 2026 income tax return. Note, too, that Medicare premiums are reevaluated each year, based upon your IRS income tax return from two years prior.

FYI, there are advantages to filing your income tax as "married/jointly" vs. married/filing separately and those are best evaluated by your tax advisor. We are not tax advisors here at the AMAC Foundation. And while it's true that the IRMAA thresholds are higher when you file as "married/jointly," it's also true that your total income as a married couple will be used when determining your IRMAA premiums for Medicare. So, once again, it is probably best to consult with a qualified income tax advisor for guidance on whether it is best, financially, for you to change how you file your income tax in 2026, considering that you will be enrolling in Medicare in 2028.

One final thing: If you are still working and have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer, "creditable" is a group plan with at least 20 participants, then you can delay enrolling in Medicare until your employer coverage ends thus temporarily avoiding the Medicare premiums. In other words, if you have creditable healthcare coverage from an employer, you don't have to enroll in Medicare immediately at age 65.

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



LETTER

Belchertown CAN! (Community Aid Network)

To the Editor,

At this joyous time of year, Belchertown CAN! would like to recognize the many generous and kind folks who support our local food programs. Hundreds of people contribute food each month to support their neighbors in need of assistance. We also sent a note of appreciation to Stop & Shop Supermarket for working with us to make this possible.

If people would like to help, they can donate to the local programs directly, or they can leave non-perishable food items in a specially-marked, drop-off container near the check-out area at Stop & Shop Supermarket. The food is collected regu-

larly and distributed to the four Belchertown food programs by volunteers from Belchertown CAN! In addition to food items, there is a great need for toiletries, health and beauty aids, and household cleaning supplies.

Belchertown has four established food programs for those in need: the Helping Hands Food Pantry at the United Church of Christ, St. Francis Roman Catholic Church, Christ Community Church's Provisions Pantry at Dwight Chapel, and the Belchertown Senior Center.

There are also two roadside food boxes in Belchertown, where food is available as needed, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

One of these is located at the intersection of Bay & Poole Roads, and the other is at Woodhaven & North Main Street. These "mini-pantries" operate on a "leave what you can; take what you need" basis and are provisioned by local volunteers. All of the programs outlined in this letter are open to anyone in need, regardless of their faith.

We thank our Belchertown CAN! volunteers and all of the volunteers in each of the programs who work tirelessly "under the radar" to alleviate food insecurity in our community. It's heartening to see the good in people.

Cliff McCarthy
Belchertown

Christmas decoration trivia

Last week I provided you with a few tips on how to make a simple evergreen swag and wreath. Hopefully you gave it a try.

For this column I thought it would be fun to share some fun facts with you, many of which I just learned today. You see, I will be working with a group of students tomorrow and wanted to have some cool trivia up my sleeve.

I'll be bringing in all the Christmas greens I talked about a week ago and will pass them around to each student: juniper, hemlock, fir, white pine and more materials, including rose hips, pine cones and holly. Read on to see if what I share is new to you, too!

For example, did you know that the Easter White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) is the tallest tree in the northeast? It also goes by the name "the Great Tree of Peace," due to the fact that five Native American tribes formed an alliance under a tall white pine; a neat correlation because the needles that are attached to the twigs are in groups of five.

This tree also has a history of being used to make ship masts, and for awhile the trees were reserved for "the Crown." The great "Pine Tree Riot" was an act of defiance that led up to the American Revolution!

One other point of interest is that pine needles are edible and contain vitamin C.

Other materials that often shows up in Christmas decorations are pine cones. What I learned today is that the correct terminology is to generically call them "cones," since they are only pine cones if they come from a pine tree! Logical point!

The hard cones we use for decorating are female and

their main purpose is to keep the naked seeds inside safe. They will open and close to maintain proper humidity levels.

One of the biggest draws to using juniper is that it smells nice and often has attractive waxy looking berries along with the foliage. It was interesting to learn that these berries are actually cones.

The seeds are protected well within the tough outer coating and can pass through an animal's digestive tract intact. That way the seeds can be dispersed far and wide - wherever the animal is traveling, I guess!

I've done complete articles on Holly (*Ilex* spp.) before, but I did learn a few new interesting tidbits with this most recent bout of research. The plant has a unique defense mechanism.

Lower foliage is extra spiny to reduce deer from browsing. Upper foliage is not nearly as spiny. There are chemicals in holly berries that make the berries unpalatable to birds and other wildlife at first, but as winter goes on they begin to taste a little better.

Still the birds only eat a few at a time thereby dispersing seeds at various rates and locales. I think all of this is so interesting and so carefully orchestrated to continue the species!

Well, I hope my research has been entertaining, and I do hope that the students enjoy my show and tell tomorrow!

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.

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

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

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Turley's Henry, Peterson recognized for work by PVSOA

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

LUDLOW – For nearly 20 years, two people have anchored the sports department at Turley Publications.

When you think of sports in the Journal Register, Sentinel News, Agawam Advertiser, or Ware River News, you think of David Henry and Tim Peterson.

Both have been members of the Turley Sports staff for almost two decades, covering every sport offered by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, and connecting with thousands of athletes over the course of their careers.

Their job has been to see that the deserving student-athletes who work hard and achieve milestones, league titles, Western Mass. titles, and college success get recognized by their communities.



Turley Publications Sports writer Tim Peterson and photographer David Henry were recognized last Friday night at the Pioneer Valley Soccer Officials Association. They are pictured with PVSOA member Joe Santos.

Last Friday night, it was their turn to be recognized for their dedicated work.

The Pioneer Valley Soccer Officials Association awarded Henry and Peterson with

Letters of Commendation. The PVSOA, which held its awards banquet at the

Ludlow Polish-American Club on Dec. 5, recognized the pair for their dedicated service of reporting and photographing boys and girls soccer, impacting multiple communities throughout the region.

The PVSOA Awards Committee believed their longtime service at Turley Publications was deserving of the letters.

Peterson had a more conventional background in sports journalism. He participated in his high school newspaper at Oxford High School and went on to work at the Southbridge Evening News.

In 2007, he transitioned to being a freelance writer for Turley Publications. At first, Peterson had an established rapport in the Palmer-Monson and Ludlow-Belchertown areas. But in recent years, readers can find Peterson in almost any

one of the towns in Turley's 11-newspaper, 17-high school coverage zone.

"I really enjoy it," Peterson said. "I just love covering sports and I really enjoy watching high school soccer."

Peterson also named baseball as one of his favorite sports to cover. Peterson, especially over the past several years, has had no shortage of exciting competition to cover. He's been at most major championship games in Turley's coverage area, and even enjoys traveling around the state to schools he has never been to thanks to the state's new tournament format.

Peterson was not even taking much of a break at the PVSOA banquet, forgoing receiving too much recognition, and focusing his atten-

Please see **RECOGNITION**, page 8

Pioneers fall to Cape Cod in vocational tournament

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

PALMER—In a span of six days, the Cape Cod Regional Vocational Tech football team traveled more than

650 miles and celebrated two upset victories in the State Vocational Tournament.

Following their 30-16 opening round victory at second-seeded Franklin County Tech on Nov. 14, the seventh-seeded Crusaders made another long bus trip from Harwich to Western Mass., on Nov. 21. This time, Cape Cod Tech overcame a ten point half-time deficit to defeat the third-seeded Pathfinder Tech Pioneers, 18-16, in a semi-final game played at Legion Field in Palmer.

It was the first meeting on the gridiron between the two squads and the final home game of the season for the Pioneers.

"I'm very close with most of the seniors, so this is a very tough loss for those guys," said Pathfinder sophomore Cassian Kowalik. "It's going to be very difficult not playing with them again next year."



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Grayson Griswold attempts a pass.

The Pioneers seniors, who wrapped up their high school football careers against rival Belchertown on Thanksgiving morning, are Dustyn Cook, Ethan Mooney, Stephen Curtis, Brandyn Wilson, Aiden

Girard, Brandon Charron, Jaiden Ambrose, Wyatt Breault, Amias Kowalik, Harold Black, and Jarrett Skowyra.

Please see **FOOTBALL**, page 8



Anthony Arventos rushes toward the sideline.



Trevor Alexander heads into the crowd.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
David DelBuono, the outgoing PVSOA President, was inducted into the Massachusetts Interscholastic Soccer Officials Association. He was recognized at the PVSOA banquet for that accomplishment by James Duggan.



Joe Santos was the Downie Award winner this year. He stands with James Duggan.



Reid Savoie receives a service award from David DelBuono.

PVSOA hold 79th awards banquet

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

LUDLOW – There are multiple soccer officials associations throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all which are responsible for the recruiting, training, assigning, and evaluating of soccer referees that do high school games, as well as some youth leagues.

The Pioneer Valley Soccer Officials Association is the only organization that is still doing awards banquets, recognizing athletes, its members for longtime service, and contributors to the soccer community.

Last Friday night at the Ludlow Polish American Club, the 79th iteration of the awards banquet was held and the same positive vibe could be felt in the room as the PVSOA gave out their sportsmanship awards, most valuable players, and other miscellaneous awards for service, contributions and dedication to the soccer community at large.

James Duggan, who was the master of ceremonies at last Friday's banquet, said he thinks it's amazing that the PVSOA is still going strong with its banquet.

"You are all a part of history," Duggan told the award winners. "Our program gets bigger every year as we have the entire history of our awards in that program."

Chief among the recognized people at the banquet are the sportsmanship awards. Coaches like Eric Degan, who coached Monson girls soccer and Tom Rivet of Chicopee boys soccer, both of whom were present at this year's awards ceremony for other recognition, often said the sportsmanship awards for their teams were huge honors.

Degan, who recently retired from coaching,

Please see **BANQUET**, page 8

Railers comeback falls short

READING, was scored by Kyle Haskins (1-0-1) at 2:54 in the third. Worcester answered the Royals' fifth goal with three goals in the second half of the period. The first by Matt DeMelis (1-1-2) (2-5), the second by Anthony Repaci (1-1-2) (3-5), and the third by Lincoln Hatten (1-1-2) (4-5). The clock ran out just as Worcester pushed for their goal to tie the game and force overtime, but the game ended in a 5-4 Royals' victory.



Reading opened the game with an early lead at 4:09. Royal's forward Massimo Rizzo (4th) tucked the puck in between the pipe and left skate of Parker Gahagen (0-1). Reading stretched their lead to two goals with a score from Jeremy Michel (1st) at 15:45 (0-2). A chance for the Railers to narrow the gap came late in the period as they went on their third power play of the night, which opened the ice for Anthony Callin to feed a pass from behind the net to Gleb Veremyev (2nd) for Worcester's first goal at 17:46 (1-2). T.J. Walsh headed to the box shortly after the tally for holding, which put Reading on their first power play of the night. Nolan Burke (3rd) nabbed a goal for the Royals 28 seconds into Walsh's penalty to re-establish their two-goal lead. Shots on goal were 12-16 in favor of Reading.

The Royals' fourth goal of the night came just over a third of the way through the second period from forward Nick Capone (2nd). Worcester played the period on the defensive and found themselves down a man on two separate occasions. Neither penalty resulted in a Royals goal, but Capone's scored soon after the clock ran out on Riley Ginnell's time served for high-sticking. Worcester was kept off of the board in the second which left the score at 4-1 Reading to close the second. Worcester trailed in shots on goal with nine to Reading's 12. Reading was assessed one penalty served by Ben Meehan.

As play resumed in the third, Worcester worked to cut into the Royals three-goal lead, turned four as Kyle Haskins (5th) added another to Reading's tally for the evening at 2:54. Worcester opened the floodgates on Reading's net and scored three times in the second half of the period. Matt DeMelis scored an even strength goal at the 12:41 mark to make it a three-goal game. Worcester then called its timeout and pulled goaltender Thomas Gale to give the team an extra attacker. Repaci (6th) (3-5), and Hatten (8th) (4-5) each added their own goals with the extra-attacker on to get back to within one. Despite their offensive push across the final 2:30 of the third, Worcester fell short by one as the final horn sounded. The final score was 5-4 Reading. Final shots were 41-35 Worcester, and final penalties were six for the Royals and three for the Railers.

Reading struck first with an early goal, scored by Massimo Rizzo (1-2-3), assisted by Nolan Burke (1-1-2) and Carter Berger (0-2-2) at 4:09 in the first. The Royals extended their scoring streak to two goals, the second added by Jeremy Michel (1-0-1), assisted by Rizzo and Ben Meehan (0-1-1) at 15:45 in the first (0-2). Worcester answered with a power play tally of their own at 17:46, scored by Gleb Veremyev (1-0-1), assisted by Anthony Callin (0-1-1) and Drew Callin (0-1-1) (1-2). Reading bookended the first period with their third goal of the night from Burke, assisted by Rizzo and Berger at 19:24. Reading grabbed the only goal in the second period, a tipped shot from Robbie Stucker (0-1-1), redirected by Nick Capone (1-0-1), also assisted by Artem Kulakov (0-1-1) at 7:46. A final Reading goal

With 7:49 remaining in the first half, sophomore quarterback Grayson Griswold completed a 36-yard pass to Skowyra at the Crusaders 33 yard line. Four plays later, Griswold, who completed four passes for 101 yards, scrambled 11 yards into the endzone capping off the seven play scoring drive. Cook made the extra point attempt giving the home team a 7-6 advantage with 5:32 left in the second quarter. After the Pioneers defense forced the Crusaders to punt, Griswold connected with Cassian Kowalik, who made an outstanding one-handed catch before rumbling about

FOOTBALL from page 7

"You're always disappointed to see the seniors' season come to an end, and I'm proud that they got this far," said Pathfinder head coach Bill Darling. "We're one of the only teams playing at the end of the season here for some type of trophy, so I'm really proud of the boys."

Pathfinder Tech (5-6) didn't have very much trouble dispatching sixth-seeded Smith Vocational, 42-12, at home in the first round of the Vocational Tournament.

The Pioneers have qualified for the Vocational Tournament three times since 2022, but they haven't advanced to the championship game yet. They lost at Nashoba Valley Tech in the 2022 semifinals.

"This is the second time during the past four years that we've lost in the Vocational semifinal game," Darling said. "We're still in the building process and our goal is to play in the championship game."

After recovering a fumble with 8:24 left in the first quarter, the visitors from Cape Cod put together a 16-play scoring drive. The series was capped off with a three yard TD run by junior running back Thomas Allen less than a minute into the second quarter.

Pathfinder sophomore Elijah Cardenas tackled junior running back Chaz Thomas in the backfield on the two-point conversion play.

The Pioneers dominated the second quarter as they scored 16 unanswered points.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Dustyn Cook kicks off for the Pioneers.

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After the Pioneers defense forced the Crusaders to punt, Griswold connected with Cassian Kowalik, who made an outstanding one-handed catch before rumbling about

20 yards into the endzone, for an impressive 51-yard TD reception.

"The cornerback was on my back, so I couldn't really back up. I just jumped as high as I could and I put my hand up and hoped I could catch it," Kowalik said. "I then saw green grass and I went for it."

Cook added the extra point, which gave Pathfinder Tech a 14-6 lead with two minutes left in the half.

Then junior Anthony Arventos sacked the Cape Cod quarterback in the end zone for a safety.

The Pioneers offense couldn't score another touchdown before the first half ended.

The Crusaders (7-4) received the second half kickoff and marched down the field.

Thomas scored on a one yard plunge into the end zone with 4:25 left in the third quarter.

Pathfinder Tech held a slim four point lead (16-12) as the two-point play failed.

With 11:09 remaining in the fourth quarter, the Crusaders retook the lead following a 19-yard TD run from junior Anthony Bartlett.

Arventos returned the ensuing kickoff about 80 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown. The long return was nullified due to a holding penalty on Pathfinder Tech.

The Pioneers offense turned the ball over on downs on their final two series of the game.

Griswold left the game late in the fourth quarter with an injury.



Amias Kowalik makes a block on the offensive line.

LIBRARY from page 3

ry-hour or call the library at 413-323-0417.

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Preschool Story Time (for ages 3-6 years)

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- 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.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Spiritual leaders
- A type of solution
- Fortified wine
- Edible mollusk
- They precede C
- A way to compare
- Government lawyer
- "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
- The eighth month (abbr.)
- Very willing
- ___ ex Machina
- Makes happy
- Type of berry
- A doctrine
- Popular Dodge truck model
- Dekagram
- Naturally occurring solid
- Company officer
- Villains
- Cricket frogs
- Influential German
- psychologist
- Endured
- A female domestic
- You can get stuck in one
- Cigarette (slang)
- Fiber optics network
- Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Belonging to the bottom layer
- Sound
- MLB legend Hank
- Very attractive person
- Late beloved sportscaster Craig
- South Dakota
- Mocking
- Symbol for gold
- Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- Humor
- Shawl

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- Containers
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- Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
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- Lay about
- Intestinal
- Opposite of yes
- Caused to be loved
- Spiritual leader of Islam
- Businesslike
- Not in
- Number above the line in a fraction
- An animal with its own day
- Pouch
- Preliminary patient assessment
- Swedish krona
- Start over
- Field flowers
- Fourteen
- One who's faking it with a computer
- Up-to-date
- Campaigns
- Touch lightly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- Supporter of the Pope
- Anxiety
- Body fluid
- One who's faking it
- Title of respect
- Chilean city
- City in central Japan
- Silk garment
- Form of dance
- Automobile
- The man
- Justice Dept. head honcho

BANQUET from page 7

said making sure his teams showed exemplary sportsmanship was even more important than winning league titles, and multiple sectional and state championships. Degnan has received nine sportsmanship awards from the PVSOA, all with Monson.

Rivet has three from the group. Two came with Chicopee boys soccer and

one with East Longmeadow.

Outgoing President David DelBuono, who received an award, emphasized the importance of holding the annual event.

He said he appreciated the hard work of all the officials who continue to work hard for the student-athletes on the playing field.

The event was attended by family and friends of the awardees along with several recognizable faces who have

served as officials for many years.

Duggan said he is looking forward to having everyone back next years for the 80th years of the awards. The banquet was established in 1946.

The PVSOA recognizes individuals with the Jimmie Downie and Larry E. Briggs Awards as well as plaques given to referees who had achieved milestone years of service..

RECOGNITION from page 7

tion on the award winners at the event (see related stories). Henry did not have a typical path to becoming Turley's longstanding sports photographer since 2006.

He had a more than 30-years career in the military in the United States Air Force. He spent many of his years working as a mechanic at Westover Air Reserve Base right in his hometown of Chicopee.

But he also spent some of his time overseas during his early days in the military.

"I bought my first SLR while I was in Thailand," Henry said. He was looking to capture moments from his tours in foreign places and began taking pictures.

He eventually built his own dark room at his home.

But he did not do too much more with photography until digital became more prevalent and he was encouraged to apply to the Chicopee Register following his retirement from the military in 2006.

He was put in contact with then-sports Editor Lou Zoldy, and has been a fixture with Turley Sports ever since. Additionally, over the years, his non-sports photo spreads have also been a huge support for Turley's mission of capturing the big events in the communities. Among other things, he has covered the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Holyoke for many years, and has done many photo spreads in Agawam, Holyoke, and Chicopee in recent years.

In accepting their letters of commendation, both thanked the PVSOA for recognizing

their work. Henry recognized the student-athletes and their accomplishments as what has found him the most enjoyment in the work he has done for the past 20 years.

Turley Sports is dedicated to the coverage of high school sports with a boots-on-the-ground type of approach, attending as many events as possible with photo or story coverage. Both Henry and Peterson's loyalty to Turley and to the student-athletes in the region personify the approach and the pursuit of that mission.

Peterson was just the third writer to be recognized by the PVSOA while Henry became the first photographer to receive a letter of commendation from the organization. The PVSOA has been awarding letters of commendation since 1979.

COMMUNITY CLOSET
from page 1

Martin went on to describe how beneficial the event was for both the people who donated the winter gear and toys as well as the people who get to look through everything and pick out what they need.

"We want to try and bring the community together," said Whitehead.

The grand re-opening offered a simple free meal to families. Families were welcome to donate things, but not required to.

There were even a few women from the collaborative in Northampton who helped out and donated some money towards the pizza.

Morgan McKee is a member of the family center committee.

"With the economy the way it is and with inflation the way it is it's becoming more and more difficult for a lot of people to just get stuff that they need. So tonight, we are hoping to get things that the families in town need," said McKee.

Before their other location was demolished the community closet was a very successful initiative. It started at 51 State St. in January of 2023.

"It started with a toy swap just after the holidays and it was so successful that we dedicated a whole room of the building to it," said Martin.

This event gave families and communities an opportunity to connect and have a fun night out.

"[I am looking forward to] really just getting our families together and getting gear out to kids that need to stay warm this winter," said Martin.

We cannot forget the

importance of community.

"Our community is in real need of support for families with young children," said Whitehead. "It's important to us to provide services especially for families who don't even have transportation."

With lack of resources, such as transportation and clothes, the family center committee is committed to trying to provide these resources to families in need.

Even though some families weren't able to make it to the grand re-opening Whitehead is going to, once the event is over, bring some of the food, clothes, and toys to these families.

Events like this give families and children chances to meet each other in a circumstance where they otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity.

"We don't know a lot of people in town. When we've had to go to things we go over to Northampton," said McKee.

"I hope that bringing us together reminds us how important it is that we come together so that we continue to build momentum and have more events like this," said



TURLEY PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MURPHY FITTS
Jackets, shoes, and more for community members to take as needed.

Martin.

Martin also brought up that on Dec. 15 they are going to attend the select board meeting to ask for a designated space for the community closet. Community members are welcome to show up to support the family center committee.



Isobelle crafts away at the craft table.



RIGHT: Children of the Belchertown community having a wonderful time making all kinds of crafts.



Gloves and mittens of all sizes to go with the warm winter jackets.



Jennifer Whitehead reading What! to members of the Belchertown community.

AUTHOR from page 1

world I create," said Leaf. "I find inspiration from the strangest experiences. Recently, my husband and I attended an incredible Vivaldi and Mozart concert in town, and from that experience, I'm already scripting a period time-travel romance."

Leaf finds inspiration all around town for her books and storytelling, and especially in the people she meets every day.

"The parents I've met over the years all have one goal in common: the love and success of their children. That sense of support and community truly stands out," said Leaf.

Leaf spent her early years in school growing up with dyslexia, something that was not widely recognized at the time, but she pressed forward, learning past it and finding strategies for herself that brought her to the top of her graduating class.

"Stay focused and keep at it (writing). The only real failure is not pursuing your dreams. Even on the busiest days, spend fifteen minutes jotting down ideas-you'll be amazed at how quickly a story begins to take shape,"

said Leaf. "And most importantly, don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it. People will doubt you, misunderstand your goals, or brush off your creativity, but your voice and your imagination are worth fighting for. If writing brings you joy, trust that instinct and keep moving forward, one page at a time."

Leaf served as a director in the healthcare industry, and found great success within her role, learning important skills like resilience, leadership, and the idea that people's stories matter, and deserve to be told.

"Those experiences shaped me, but they're separate from my writing journey and from the reason I founded The Nathan Leaf Foundation. The foundation is a very personal part of my life, created to honor my son's memory by helping families who are facing their own medical challenges. It's work that means the world to me," said Leaf.

The Nathan Leaf Foundation is a 501-c3 non-profit that honors the life of Nathan Leaf, Diane's son, in order to help others navigate the hardships and challenges that come with those experiencing a medical crisis. The Foundation works to provide people with



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Author Diane Leaf with some of her books inspired by Belchertown.

easy access to healthcare information for both patients and caregivers, and provides sources on how to manage your own healthcare and how

to receive that care. "The Nathan Leaf Foundation for Patient Advocacy empowers patients and caregivers with clear,

reliable information to navigate their unique healthcare journey. Our mission is to cut through the noise, providing focused guidance and trusted resources that help individuals access the best care for their specific needs—without the burden of information overload," states the Foundation's website.

"My mother always told me I had a vivid imagination-and she was right. Those wild ideas and daydreams have become the heart of my stories. For anyone who struggles with reading, please use my journey as encouragement," said Leaf. "You can do this. Start with your imagination, trust it, and jot it down. Sometimes the very thing that once made you feel different becomes your greatest strength."

Her books, available on Amazon under the pen

name D.L.L. Leaf, include: Timewalker: Bloodlines Awakened (Book 1 - Legends of the Timewalker Series), When Lions Whispered My Name: Zoppie Loppie Adventures, The Little Racer's Prayer, Julia's Rainy Day Walk, Julia Loves Mornings in the Garden, The Seven Year Track, and The Fairies and Forest of Giants. She also has two books coming soon: A Christmas Angel's Gift, available on Amazon December 12, and Timewalker: Fallen Through Time (Book 2 - Legends of the Timewalker Series) available January 2026.

You can learn more about the Nathan Leaf Foundation by visiting their website, <https://www.nathanleaffoundation.org>, and learning how to donate, contact them, and more.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Probate and Family Court
15 Atwood Drive
Northampton, MA 01060
(413)586-8500
Docket No.
HS25P0741EA
Estate of:
Robert Leo Perron
Also known as:
Robert L. Perron
Date of Death: 08/07/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Donna A. Sroka of Holyoke, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that Donna A. Sroka of Holyoke, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain

a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/24/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Diana S. Velez Harris, First Justice of this Court.

Date: November 20, 2025
Mark S Ames,
Register of Probate
12/11/2025

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

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413-530-3804
12/04, 12/11, 12/18/2025



OBITUARY

Charity D. Farrar

Charity D. Farrar, 77 of Wiscasset, passed away on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, which would have been her 59th wedding anniversary, after a brief battle with cancer. She was born in Hanover, NH on April 3, 1948, to the late Clarence L. and M. Arlene (Elliott) Strong of Littleton, NH where she grew up.



Charity was known for her warmth and loving nature, and was a mother figure to many of her daughters' friends. She was known for referring to people as 'Hon' and loved gardening, movies, books, and her menagerie of pets. She

briefly attended UMASS Amherst before meeting the love of her life on Columbus Day weekend 1968 and marrying him seven weeks later on December 3rd.

Charity battled many health issues throughout her life, including rheumatoid arthritis. She endured daily pain for many decades, but always remained optimistic and put her family's needs before her own. Prior to her disability retirement, she worked in retail.

Charity was predeceased by her husband, Donald H., and is survived by her loving daughters, Felicia and Abigail; her son-in-law, Robert Gorcynski; her sister,

DEATH NOTICE

Charity D. Farrar
Died December 3
Services private

Susan Savage; her brother, Samuel (Judi) Strong; and her extended family.

Funeral arrangements will be private per Charity's wishes. Donations in Charity's memory may be made to the Rheumatology Research Foundation, 2200 Lake Blvd NE, Atlanta, GA 30319 (rheumatologyresearch.org); or Midcoast Humane, 5 Industrial Parkway, Brunswick, Maine 04011 (midcoasthumane.org).

Arrangements are under the direction and care of the Strong-Hancock Funeral Home, 612 Main Street, Damariscotta, ME 04543. Condolences, and messages for her family, may be expressed by visiting: www.StrongHancock.com.

HOLIDAYS from page 5

Seek Moments of Comfort, Not Joy

This season is often labeled as "joyful," but joy can feel out of reach when your heart is heavy. Instead of forcing joy, look for pockets of comfort: a warm cup of tea, soft music, a quiet corner, a pet curled beside you. These small moments of peace are enough. Joy will return in its own time.

Name Your Needs to Someone You Trust

People often want to help but don't know how. Tell someone you trust what you need, whether it's a phone call, company at an event, help with meals, or space

to talk. Be honest about your struggles. Sharing your needs allows others to show up for you in meaningful ways.

Consider Simple Ritual or Spiritual Practices

Ritual can be grounding in seasons of grief. Lighting a candle, journaling, praying, reading Scripture, or attending a simple service can offer a sense of presence and connection. Rituals do not need to be elaborate; sometimes the smallest act can be the most comforting.

Seek Support When You Feel Overwhelmed

You do not have to walk this path alone. Counselors, chaplains, and grief groups can offer guidance, tools,

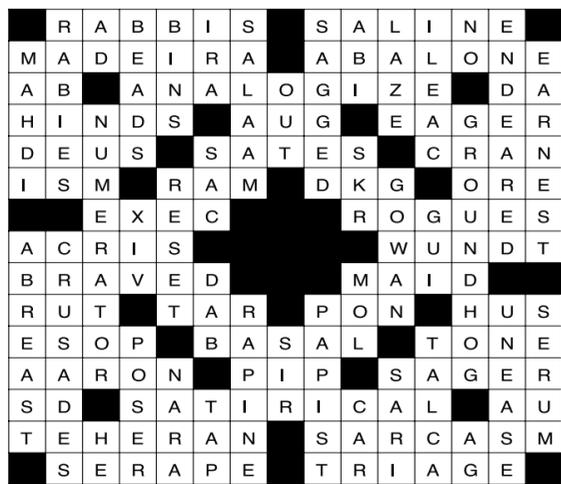
and companionship. Don't wait until you feel overwhelmed, reach out early. Sharing your experience with others who understand can be deeply healing.

Grief does not disappear for the holidays, and it does not need to. But with tenderness, boundaries, and support, you can move through this season with compassion for yourself. May you find moments of comfort, rest, and light as you navigate the days ahead.

Rev. Peter-Michael Preble is the Chaplain for the Hull Fire Department and a Hospice Chaplain with Croi Health (Formerly Norwell VNA) in Norwell, Massachusetts. Follow him at www.peterpreble.net

EARLY DEADLINE
In observance of **NEW YEAR'S** for Dec. 29-Jan. 2 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!** Place your advertisement no later than **Thurs., Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.**
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visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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.



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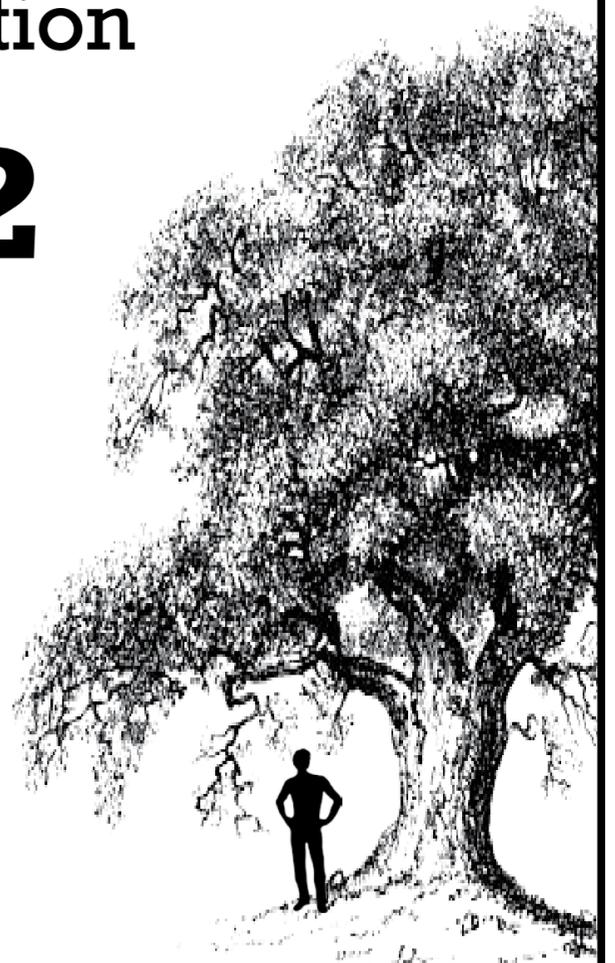
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