

Students give back to **ANIMAL SHELTER**

By Emily-Rose Pappas
 Staff Writer
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BELCHERTOWN – The holiday season has finally arrived, and the stockings have been hung, the candles lit, the tree decorated, the lights are up, and the meals are planned.

However, while we are buying presents for our human friends and family, some of us may have forgotten about the animals not living in our homes, that need some care and love.

The fifth graders from Chestnut Hill in Mrs. Anderman's, Mrs. Eldridge's, Mrs. O'Neill's, and Mrs. Crowe's classes have been able to spend time with Officer Austin and Comfort Dog Oliver in the past few weeks, doing some special reading times with him.

"Oliver created a calming and non-judgmental environment that helped our students feel confident and motivated to read aloud texts and their writing," said Mrs. Crowe.

"His presence made reading and writing an enjoyable and rewarding experience, encouraging growth in fluency, focus,



Animal Control Officer Anna Fenton, fifth grade students Watson Phelps, Trevor Staples, and Brayden Reigner, and BARC Secretary Pat Sanvita accepting the donations with Comfort Dog Oliver

Please see **STUDENTS**, page 5

Supt. search continues

Committee nets zero following resignation

By Melina Bourdeau
 Correspondent

GRANBY — At its recent meeting, the School Committee decided to post the superintendent position at the beginning of the new year.

Committee member Lafond reported to School Committee Chair Jen Bartosz that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees offers free technical assistance.

"They can help with posting. There is a staff member that can receive all the applications and make sure they're complete," said Bartosz.

The last time the position was posted, a salary range was included, and Bartosz asked if the committee wanted to have the range on the posting.

Please see **SEARCH**, page 15

Group shows compassion, love with new friendships

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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BELCHERTOWN – The holiday season is a time where family and friends are at the forefront of our minds, whether it be finding them gifts, or getting to see the people you don't usually get to see.

"When you move to a town in your later years, some of us yearn for friendship and a sense of community."

– Nancy Brill

However, the holidays can be an incredibly lonely time, so having a unit of friendships during this time is especially important.

At the senior center, there is a special group for ladies to get together once a month called the

Silver Sisterhood, which was begun by Nancy Brill and her dear friend Maureen Keizer.

After hearing about a similar group in a neighboring town, Brill and Keizer found something to bring in to the town.

"The first meeting of the Silver Sisterhood group took place in June of 2024. With Maureen Keizer's encouragement and the go ahead from our fabulous Activities Director, Stephanie Fraleigh, we were off and running to a great start," said Brill.

"Over the few months of meetings, members have become comfortable with one another to the point of feeling the support with either sharing their own stories or listening with an empathetic ear to others' stories," said Keizer.

Please see **SISTERHOOD**, page 15

Veterans services given donations

Community shows support with generosity

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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BELCHERTOWN – The holiday season is a giving season, and our community is known for its generosity, and in this case, it shone within the Veteran's Services Department.

A local veteran here in town and his wife brought last week to the office several of bags full of hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks, and slippers.

But the generosity didn't end there. With several food items donated this week, there was also multiple bags of hats, socks, gloves, blankets, more slippers, new shirts, and jackets to make sure all have access to warm things.

Another family donated five \$100 gift cards to veterans in the community for groceries,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bags and bags of blankets ready to go home with someone to keep them warm this winter.

and before that a woman came to donate a \$100 grocery gift card for a veteran experiencing homelessness and is staying in VA transitional housing.

"In the last several months many people in town have collected items for this gentleman for when he is placed in a new apartment. The only thing

he will need is the key," said Charly Oliva, the Belchertown Veteran's Services Coordinator.

But it isn't just warm clothes, food, and gift cards that are being donated to veterans in need this holiday season, but furniture to suit up a house.

Please see **VETERANS**, page 4



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COMMUNITY

State Rep. Aaron Saunders shares his admiration for community

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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BELCHERTOWN – When it comes to the ideas of politics, and the politicians who represent us, a lot of the time, we think of all the negatives associated with talking about these subjects.

However, stopping and getting the chance to talk to your candidates and truly get to know them can be a positive step in understanding the purpose of politics, and lead to healthier discourse.

Belchertown has the privilege to have Aaron Saunders as a state representative. Residing here in town, he has the unique privilege of seeing us and being with us, here in a community who's love for their neighbors shines.

"It is the people. We have all these great events and amenities, and I think it's natural to point to any of these as a "favorite", but it's the people who take time out of their lives to put these events on, and the people who attend that make this town so great."

Even on the cold nights like during the tree lighting cer-

emonies on the Winter Light Night, people are still in a happy mood, smiling, and bundled up as the police and fire departments and local businesses come together.

"What makes it so unique, is these are the types of experiences you can't really pay for. The specialness of these community events, from the Belchertown Fair to National Night Out and everything in between, is that it is the result of people in a community who really do care for one another," said Saunders.

Even though there are only thirteen days left of this term, Saunders is looking forward to serving for his second two-year term beginning on Jan. 1.

"I am incredibly honored to be elected to serve a second term to represent Belchertown and the entire 7th Hampden District," said Saunders.

"We have work to do on everything from health care, to education, to protecting our open spaces, as well as education, housing, and many many



State Rep. Aaron Saunders

more issues," said Saunders, reflecting on the dreams he has to make this community even better.

One of these projects involves the Belchertown State School Campus. "It's a big area of land that really does have tremendous potential," said Saunders.

"It's putting together projects with the needs of the public interest in mind," said Saunders.

"[This] was my first term... and being able to bring funding back through the community means a lot," said Saunders. "It's been a thrill to participate in the conversations that have included resulted in record education funding and generational investment in housing production."

He shared his desire to help the community understand that he is here to help us, and being "able to assist when we get that call, whether its heating assistance, food insecurity, or helping navigate areas of state government like unemployment insurance."

From an early age, Saunders

has wanted to take on the position of being able to provide positive representation, and began with office work in Springfield, where he recounted the meaningful opportunity of being able to assist a woman with social security.

He served on the Ludlow Selectboard for a time, and saw the challenges associated with leadership in the political spheres, but it was a challenge he knew he could take on.

"We now also live in a time where the political discourse can be incredibly toxic... and I had a lot of conversations with my family, because you can't do this alone, and I really reflected on the good that can come from able representation. I felt that I could really give that representation," said Saunders.

"I really focused on working my tail off in my first term and earning the support of the community to go back to Boston for two more years, has really validated those efforts, and to continue to dedicate myself to the district."

Saunderson has been able to take part in many cool and interesting opportunities, including learning about the different parts of state government,

and developing bonds with the Quabbin base for the state police.

He got to see the state police perform various demos on their services, and Saunders also got the opportunity to commemorate the Route 9 bridge after Army Specialist Ken Iwasinski with a special ceremony on the Quabbin to remember his sacrifices.

"I'm here, and I'm here to help," said Saunders said, wanting the community to know he is dedicated completely to the county, and ensuring that this region of the state is heard in Boston.

You can find Aaron Saunders holding several office hours throughout the year, across the towns at senior centers and more for you to get to know him.

"Holding office hours throughout the district helps keep me close to the folks I represent. It offers opportunities not just to ask questions or seek assistance, but to offer thoughts and perspectives about the issues impacting the lives of people who live here."

Blood Donation Team is coming to Palmer, blood drives offered in 2025

PALMER— The community is invited to begin the holiday season by giving the gift of life by donating blood at the Baystate Health blood drive. Blood Drives will be held every other month on Wednesdays throughout the year in 2025, held on February 12, April 16, June 11, August 13, October 15, and December 17.

There continues to be an urgent need for blood, when you donate blood to Baystate Health, your precious gift remains in our local communities," said Nicole VanZandt, MLT III, supervisor, BRL Blood Donor Services. "Please help us to ensure a safe and adequate blood supply is available by donating blood with the

Baystate Health Blood Donor Program."

"There is no substitute for human blood," said VanZandt. "Blood donations take approximately one hour to complete, including the interview, donation, and refreshments. To donate blood, you must be at least 17 years old; weigh at least 110 pounds have a photo ID;

be in good health (no colds, or sore throat); and have not donated blood within the past eight weeks."

Blood drives will be held at Baystate Wing Hospital, 40 Wright Street, Palmer, in Snow Conference Room C. In appreciation, all eligible donors will receive a \$10 Gift card. For more information or to book an

appointment to donate blood please call the Blood Donor Center at 413-794-4600. Please be sure to note the Baystate Health hospital location where you would like to make your appointment when you make your appointment.

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PNA Lodge 711 hosts *Children's Holiday Party*

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - The Lodge 711 Polish National Alliance of Chicopee hosted a Children's Holiday Party at the Chicopee Falls Polish Home on Dec. 15.

The party ran from 1 to 5 p.m. with attendees--members of the PNA and their families--enjoying raffle prizes, arts and crafts, games, a hot cocoa station, making holiday cards for elders in nursing homes in Chicopee, a Holiday Sweater Competition, visits with Santa, singing Polish and English carols and a classic Polish dinner.

Also among the volunteers were members from the National Honor Society at Minnechaug Regional High School in Wilbraham, with members of the Wilbraham PNA Lodge 3276 also taking part in the festivities.

In addition to families from Chicopee and Wilbraham and Hampden, families from Ludlow and Belchertown and other surrounding communities also were in attendance at the event.

Teresa Sherman, financial secretary, treasurer and sales representative for the PNA Lodge 711, was excited about the annual event, sharing it's also the first time the MRHS NHS is volunteering.

"We're having lots of fun and singing and having Polish food," Sherman said. "We



A group of happy children meeting Santa during the Polish National Alliance Lodge 711 Children's Party Holiday at the Chicopee Falls Polish Home on Dec. 15.



A shot of the PNA logo.

couldn't ask for anything more."

President Joanne Cebula, who is overseeing the event for the first time after taking

over from her father, the late Mitchell Nowak--who served for many years--explained the PNA is a fraternal organization that started in the 1880s "to unite Polish immigrants and the community to the American society."

Cebula added the Holiday Party is the organization's major event of the year, thanking the Chicopee Falls Polish Home for letting them host the event.

"It started with a lot of sports,



Isabella Strand, Alexa Sherman and Katelynn Pronovost smile in front of the Christmas tree. The girls volunteered at the event as part of the National Honor Society at Minnechaug Regional High School.

youth, educational groups. There's also a yearly scholarship that they provide," Cebula

said. "They also have a publication. They have quarterly Zgoda. So, they try to keep

tradition going. A lot of folk music, dancing, youth sports and dance groups."

Sherman added the organization also supports other non-profit organizations, a member of the Polish American Congress in Holyoke and supports the Polish Center for Discovery & Learning.

"We try to help where help is needed in the community," Sherman said.

Alexa Sherman, the granddaughter of Teresa Sherman, is an NHS member and came up with the idea for the annual Children's Holiday Party, enjoying seeing the children get the presents from Santa.

"As I grew up, I always came to these parties and my grandmother and my grandfather would run them. So, I was

Please see PNA, page 9

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Two arm chairs and an ottoman may not look like much, but the conversations and fellowship here will last a lifetime.



Blankets, sweatshirts, and coats, things we here in New England may be taking for granted.

VETERANS from page 1

Bacon Wilson Law Firm P.C. contacted Oliva and asked if she would be able to assist them in finding veterans who may be interested or in need of furniture, or small kitchen appliances like a coffee maker, microwave, and utensils. The firm also had two wheelchairs which have already found homes with veterans in need.

"I'm currently working with a VA case manager who recently helped move a veteran family into Belchertown into a new apartment and we may be able to furnish many rooms in their new apartment," said Oliva.

However, the office takes donations year-round, and you can find a small donation-driven pantry outside the office in the hallway.

"I prefer to keep it out there so folks can come and go and take things as they need without feeling like they're being watched or judged," said Oliva.

There is one large self that has food items, and the other has hygiene, cleaning, and household items.

"We have many wonderful people in town who bring by

non-perishables and hygiene items to help me keep the shelves stocked," said Oliva. "A group from the Council on Aging has also been responsible for hundreds of dollars in donations to make sure that I can stock those shelves when items are running low."

Some items that go the fastest and are constantly needed include personal hygiene items, household and cleaning items, and paper products.

For food, items like canned foods, pastas, and rice don't go very quickly, but meal kits, cereal, spices, oils, tuna, and peanut butter go fast.

"The community is probably going to get tired of me saying I love it here so very much," said Oliva. "There's so much support; if I just mention that I need something for a veteran, somebody comes out of the woodwork to help make sure that we're fulfilling the need."

Donating items doesn't have to take a lot, and just by adding a few extra items to your grocery cart can make the biggest difference in someone else's life, especially in the lives of veterans who fought for us.

"I would like the community



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Warm tall socks help to keep your toes warm and cold air out of your boots.

to know that my office is here to help veterans their dependents and their surviving spouses that are in need," said Oliva.

The holiday season is meant to be a time of giving, of family, of love, so consider giving the gift of a hat and gloves, a blanket, or even the ingredients to make your favorite meal, and watch the holiday cheer spread.



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College NOTES

Univ. of Utah's summer 2024 dean's list

SALT LAKE CITY, UT—Gianna Laroche, of Belchertown, was named to the University of Utah's summer 2024 dean's list.

Laroche was among more than 2,800 students named to the Summer 2024 Dean's List at the U. To qualify, the students earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher in at least 12 graded credit hours during the summer term.



Belchertown resident appointed to NSAC

DUDLEY— Troy Pelletier of Belchertown, is one of 16 students appointed by Nichols College President Bill Pieczynski to the 2024-2025 Nichols Senior Advisory Council.

This group of accomplished seniors will meet with the President and members of the President's Counsel monthly and act as an advisory group as the College plans for the future.

"Congratulations to the students selected for this year's NSAC cohort. These are exemplary students, citizens and leaders who

have distinguished themselves among a strong senior class," said Pieczynski. "Their insights will be invaluable to the leadership team, and we look forward to hearing their perspectives and learning more about these outstanding students."

Upcoming NSAC meetings will include discussions on the College's new initiatives as well as broader trends and issues in higher education. In addition to helping Nichols enhance the overall experience for all members of its community, the meetings are also intended as an opportunity for students to further strengthen their communication and presentation skills, which are critical to career advancement.



TURLEY PHOTO BY EMILY-ROSE PAPPAS

The \$100 donation, and the countless boxes and bags of treats, food, and toys for cats and dogs to enjoy.

DONATION from page 1

and perseverance. Beyond literacy, Oliver fostered empathy and comfort, leaving a lasting impact on our classroom," said Crowe.

As a way to share their appreciation for Officer Austin and her trusty partner Oliver, these four fifth grade classes worked together to collect donations for BARC and the Animal Shelter to help animals in need.

The students and their families worked to bring in money, pet food, toys, treats, and little jackets for dogs and cats in need at the shelter in order to thank Oliver for his very special and appreciated visits to their classrooms.

Several students collected these donations, and brought them to the shelter, as well as a handmade post-

er of a check made out to BARC for \$100, which will go back in to helping animals in need.

"These donations will allow us to help the animals in our care and also help out pet owners in need in our community," said Animal Control Officer Anna Fenton.

While this was the first time the Chestnut Hill fifth graders joined up to bring in donations, Belchertown students in many different grades have worked to donate food and toys to the shelter almost yearly.

"We are always looking to keep our pet food pantry stocked so that we can help out residents in need," said Fenton.

The animal control's food pantry is filled with both wet and dry food for cats and dogs, including treats that will help the animals in

the shelter, as well as the animals who are a part of our community.

"What I love the most is the generosity of both the youngsters and adults in our community," said Fenton. "If we have a need or an animal in our care has a need we have a community that will support us in our endeavors."

Whether the animals are strays, ferals, or in need of new homes or behavioral help, the animal control office has been able to help countless animals and show them the love they need.

"My favorite part of being an Animal Control Officer is being able to help both the animals and residents in our community," said Fenton.

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OPINION

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

Have I saved Social Security money by claiming at 62?

Dear Rusty:

I had to start collecting Social Security at 62 and I am 75 now.

I believe that in the last 13 years I have saved Social Security money, so I do not know why I cannot draw my full benefits now.

If I had started drawing at 65 at \$1,200 per month, then I would have drawn \$16,400 per year. Instead, I got \$680 per month from 62 to 75 or \$8,160 per year or about \$106,000 over 13 years. Compare that to the age 65 amount of \$14,400 per year for 10 years, which is \$144,000. So, by claiming at 62, at age 75 I have saved the government over \$38,000. It would make seniors lives so much easier if they could draw full Social Security at 75 years old, after getting only part of their SS.

Signed: Second-guessing

Dear Second-guessing:

The difference between benefits claimed at various ages causes many to reflect, as you have done, about what might have been had you waited longer to claim. But there is an error in your calculations. If your age 62 monthly benefit is \$680, your age 65 monthly benefit would have been about \$845, not \$1,200. Thus, at 75 you would have collected about \$101,400 by claiming at 65, vs. the \$106,000 you have received by claiming at age 62. In other words, you still would not have broken even had you claimed at age 65.

Social Security says that it doesn't matter when you claim they say that if you claim early your payments will be less, but you'll get more of them. Where SSA's argument falls apart is when life expectancy is longer. Our experience is that if you wait until your Full Retirement Age to claim, which is age 66 in your case vs. claiming at age 62, you will collect the same amount of total money at about age 78.

In other words, the "breakeven age" for waiting until FRA to claim is about 78. So, you will reach your personal "breakeven age" in about 2 1/2 years, at age 78). And this is precisely why we encourage everyone to understand their life expectancy when deciding when to claim Social Security those who expect to live longer will, indeed, get more SS money if they delay claiming.

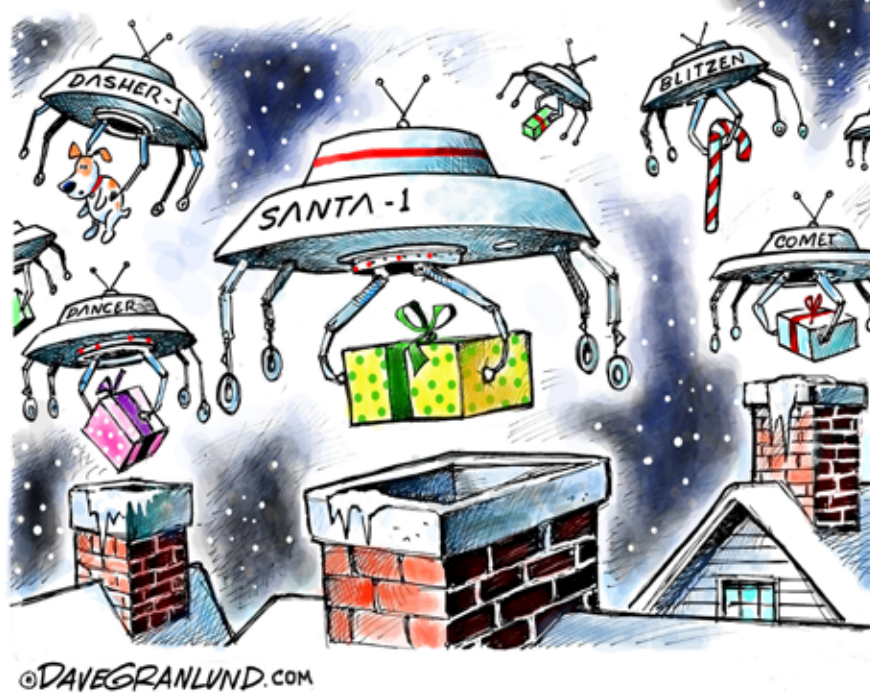
Your benefit is determined by your age when you claim and if you claim before your FRA your monthly amount is permanently reduced. If you claimed at age 62 and your monthly amount was \$680, then in the four years until you reached age 66, your FRA, you would have received about \$32,640. If you had, instead, waited until your FRA to claim, your benefit at age 66 would have been about \$906/month. Collecting \$906/month (at 66) vs. \$680/month (at 62) would make your breakeven age about 78. If you claimed at age 65 instead of 62, your breakeven age would have been about a year earlier (77).

So, have you saved Social Security money? Up to this point, you have not. Since you claimed at age 62, you have collected about \$680/month for 13 years until you were 75 (or about \$106,000). If you had waited until age 65 to claim you would have, instead, collected about \$101,400 – in other words you have received more, so far, by claiming at age 62. But that will change when you reach 77, your breakeven age, had you claimed at 65). Starting at age 77, you will have received less in cumulative lifetime benefits because you claimed at age 62.

Which, again, is why – at the AMAC Foundation's Social Security Advisory Service – we encourage everyone to consider life expectancy when deciding when to take Social Security. Of course there are other factors too, not the least of which is financial need, but life expectancy is key. And since the benefit you get when you claim is permanent except for annual Cost of Living Adjustments, deciding when to claim Social Security is a decision which affects a lifetime.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

ABOUT THE DRONE ACTIVITY IN THE EVENING SKIES...



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Snowy owl

Snowy owls have already been spotted in Massachusetts this year.

They come from the tundra area of Canada into the United States during the winter. Usually, the snowy owls that head to this area are immature. This irruptive behavior may or may not be coordinated with the lemming cycle, one of their primary foods especially during their breeding cycle.

The snowy owl is about 24 inches long and primarily white, yellow eyes and variable amounts of black spots and barring. Immatures are darker than adults and females darker than males.

Snowy owls frequently hunt during the day. Their diet is mainly rodents, Arctic and snowshoe hares, fish, birds including waterfowl and carrion.

They nest on the tundra in a shallow depression on a mound on top or on a gravel mound. They line the nest with feathers and bits of moss. The female lays three to ten white eggs. When prey is abundant the clutch size is larger. They make barking noises during breeding, but are quiet in winter.

They inhabit the open tundra and when they move south, they inhabit airports, beaches, marshes and open fields.

Many years ago, a snowy owl appeared in Oakham during the winter. I was lucky

to see it perched on a fence post near an open field in the daytime. People came from all over to see this rare visitor. Logan Airport is a popular winter stop over.

Bald eagle sighting

On Dec. 2 I received an email from a Brimfield resident. He said, "I've been checking the local ponds but not a lot happening. However, I have seen a bald eagle or two at the pond on New Reed Street four time in the last two weeks and another birder I met there reported seeing eagles there that I missed. On one visit two adult bald eagles were sitting in the same dead tree about fifteen feet apart."

Christmas Bird Count

He plans to participate in the Allen's Bird Count Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 14. National Audubon Society 125th Christmas Bird Counts take place Saturday, Dec. 14 through Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025. This is one of the most popular birding events of the year. It is rarely held on the actual designated holiday itself, counts are scheduled to take place on various days surrounding Dec. 25 within the official count period noted above. Counting takes place anytime during the 24 hours, midnight-to-midnight.

The goal is to find, identify and count all birds within a 15-mile diameter "count circle." All are welcome. Compilers do their best to make sure that beginners join a group with at least one experienced birder. Locations in late December include: Quabbin on Saturday, Dec. 28 compiler Scott Surner at ssurner@aol.com and Westminster on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025 compiler Charles Caron at 978-874-5649 or caronev@aol.com.

People may visit <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count> to read about CBC history, science and data.

Juncos and snow

The Brimfield resident noted a large flock of juncos about 40 the day before

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 8

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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.

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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.

GUEST COLUMN

A wintry hike on Mt. Monadnock

By Julie Midura

“I don’t think we’re on the trail anymore.”

Tom and I drove to Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire last week following a recent snowstorm. After parking our car at the trailhead, we made quick work of the road walk to the old Halfway House site, where we had a choice to make. We could continue straight ahead onto the well packed out and very popular White Arrow Trail, or hang a sharp right onto the lesser used and more difficult to follow Hello Rock Trail.

We paused when we reached the junction. One look in the direction of Hello Rock Trail told us that we would have our work cut out for us if we chose that route. Not only was the snow much deeper than we expected, but there were no other boot prints in sight. We would be breaking trail.

After not hiking anything strenuous in weeks and feeling less than confident in our ability to tackle some moderate trail breaking, I hesitated for a fraction of a second. I took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, then turned right towards Hello Rock Trail. No time like the present to see just how out of shape we were!

As we broke through the calf-deep, thick blanket of white that covered the tread-way, the path was fairly obvious- four feet wide and slightly lower than the earth on either side. But we continued forward, undaunted by the fact that we were fairly



Tom takes in the beautiful snow covered view.



Julie smiles brightly at the top of Mt. Monadnock.

certain we were no longer on the actual trail. After all, if we couldn’t locate the path, we’d just follow our footprints in the snow back to where the trail was more obvious, and then attempt to find the spot where we had made a wrong turn. In the meantime, we enjoyed moving through the Narnia-like forest of white.

I was in the lead when I

stopped suddenly at the base of a very steep rock outcropping. The thought of going up the hill made my heart rate soar. However, the hope that we might be able to catch sight of the trail from the top and reconnect with the path we were supposed to be on helped assuage my fear. I ignored my rapidly beating heart, slammed my trekking poles into the snow-cov-

ered rock, kicked my spike-clad boots into the snow, and hauled myself up.

Only to realize that “You can’t get there from here.”

Upon reaching the top of the snow covered ledge, we discovered that we were mere feet from a sheer vertical drop-off. At this point, we had three options. Well, in reality, just two, since plunging off the

ledge onto the jagged rocks below was never really a viable option to begin with.

1- Continue bushwhacking upwards in an attempt to see where we would end up. The hope being that we’d eventually find Cliff Walk Trail. (Tom’s idea)

2- Turn back and try to find where we zigged when we

Please see **HIKE**, page 7

In this month’s online issue

**Happy New Year
from
the Quabbin
Health District!**

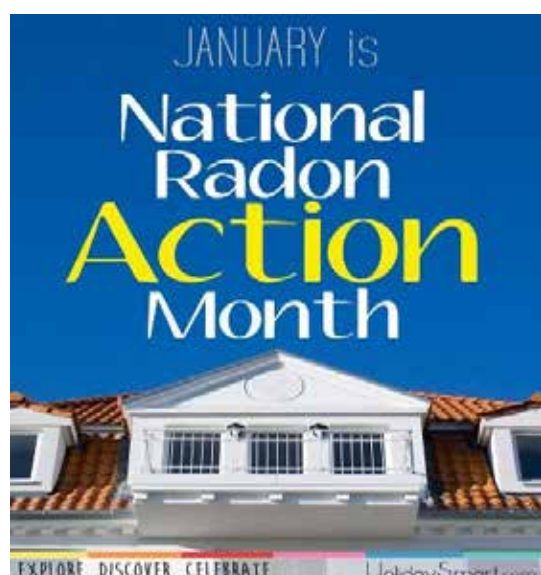
**Upcoming Events
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Health District
Public Health Nurse
Newsletter**

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GRANBY

Granby Clerk Reminders

GRANBY—Annual Census Information: The 2025 Annual Census will be mailed out at the beginning of January, to avoid any voting problems please mail back your census.

Compliance with this state requirement provides proof of residence, it protects voting rights, veteran's bonuses, housing for the elderly and related benefits.

The Annual Town Census does not register you as a voter or change your party enrollment. You must fill out a voter registration form or a change of enrollment card. This can be done by going

on-line at www.sec.state.ma.us and go under "Elections", or for more information on voter registration call the Town Clerk's office.

Also included with the Census is a flyer pertaining to voting, office hours, dog licensing, and a schedule for the landfill pickup.

Please continue to check our website at www.granby-ma.gov for any further information on any of our town affairs.

Dog Licenses: The Annual Census contains a Pre-Registration form, and this is the First Notice for the 2025 dog licenses. Dog licenses are valid from April –

April of each year however, if you wish to pre-register your dogs for 2025, follow the instructions on the form and return it with the census, or you may wait until March or April and stop by the office to license your dog. Please note that after May 1, 2025, a \$25.00 late charge may be applied along with the annual dog fee.

Thanking you all in advance for your cooperation with this mailing.

For any questions or concerns please call the Town Clerk's office- 467-7178.

EQLT holds New Year's Day walk

East Quabbin Land Trust will start off 2025 with a New Year's Day walk, Wednesday, Jan. 1 at noon at the New Braintree Trail Station Site, 1700 Hardwick Road.

This will be a casual walk on the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Hardwick. EQLT will also dedicate the Terry Briggs Memorial Bench in Wheelwright.

Notch Visitor Center open for winter 2024-2025

AMHERST – Winter at the Mount Holyoke Range is a magical experience, and a visit to the Notch Visitor Center, 1500 West St., Route 116, is the perfect way to enjoy it.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Mount Holyoke Range State Park is ideal for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. The Notch Visitor Center enhances your park experience with engaging exhibits that highlight the unique features of the Mount Holyoke Range.

Special public programs provide a broader perspective of the park, and staff are on hand to offer trail information and hiking suggestions. There's something for everyone, from beginners to seasoned adventurers.

Free admission and parking. The center is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

For more information and upcoming programs, call 413-253-2883 or visit <https://www.mass.gov/locations/mount-holyoke-range-state-park>.

HIKE from page 7

should have zagged, and get back on the actual trail. (My idea)

One of the great things about hiking with a partner is that when one of you has a harebrained, cockamamie, dare I say utterly ridiculous idea, the more rational one can help you dial back the crazy, so to speak

Now I'm not saying that I'm always the logical part of the equation. Quite the contrary. I'm usually the one who likes to push the envelope when we hike together. You know- find out just how much we are capable of.

In those instances, Tom graciously offers his unsolicited advice, both for the betterment of our marriage, as well as to ensure that we aren't put into a perilous situation by my occasionally wacky ideas.

On Saturday, however, it was my turn to be the sensible half of our partnership. With temperatures in the teens, I had no desire to continue bushwhacking in an area where a magnitude of snow had effectively erased the crevices and deep holes surrounding the enormous boulders which were lying in wait to swallow a leg or twist an ankle. And after only mild persuasion on my part, Tom agreed. Needless to say, 'self preservation' won out over 'adrenaline rush' and we turned back, eventually finding the sharp right turn we had missed earlier.

And at the end of the day, the summit was reached, views were had, pizza was consumed, hot cider was enjoyed, joy was found. And we lived to hike another day.

Honestly, what more could we possibly ask for? See you in the wintry wild places, my friends!

Follow Julie and Tom on Instagram @morethanthe-mountain for more of their hiking adventures.

BACKYARD from page 6

the Dec. 5 snow storm. He said, "Storms a commin' I looked out near where the feeding stations are located and where I spread mixed seed on the ground and a quick count resulted in 40 junco. And chickadees and titmice were constantly back and forth to the black oil sunflower seed feeder." I also saw a large flock of juncos on my daughter's lawn in Barre on that Wednesday.

Pond visits

The Brimfield resident makes frequent trips to ponds in his area. He found most of them frozen over on Dec. 4. He did count 12 hooded mergansers at Holland Pond, a large group of mallards over 200 and three black ducks at Sherman Pond.

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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PNA from page 5

always a part of it and I thought it would be a good idea to help them set up because I know it takes a lot for her now as she's gotten older," Sherman said. "So, I thought it would be a good way to help give back to my community and help NHS be involved with the party."

Sherman was excited to have NHS take part in the event as it provides the students an opportunity to give back and learn about PNA.

"It helps just give back to our communities like I've been saying and I think it's important to be involved in your community and to just help everyone who needs help or help people that need more help now," Sherman said. "So, I think with helping the Polish National Alliance and different communities like that, it helps spread holiday cheer and it just assists people who need extra help."

Like her grandmother, Sherman also believes in keeping traditions alive.

"It's important to keep that tradition and to keep all of your values as you grow up, so you can instill them in your family members and things like that," Sherman said. "So, they can grow up knowing about their heritage and their ethnicity because that's what this party's about."

Teresa Sherman wants the community to know how much the PNA enjoys holding this event.



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Members of the PNA Lodge 711 and members of the Wilbraham PNA Lodge 3276 also got to meet with Santa Claus in this fun group photo.

"It's very heartwarming. It's a lot of work to begin with, but it's really worth it to see everybody having a good time," Sherman said.

Alexa Sherman's message to everyone is the importance of getting together.

"Some of these families may not know each other, but when

they come to this party they may all establish a great connection just because of a similarity of being Polish or whatever or even just the holiday spirit," Sherman said. "Just coming together and having fun I think that's just great."

Missing Belchertown man discovered deceased

BELCHERTOWN – The body of a 27-year-old Belchertown man was discovered this morning in a wooded area two days after he was last seen by family.

Belchertown Police and Firefighters, State Police Detectives attached to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, pilots with the Massachusetts State Police Air Wing unit as well as the

Special Emergency Response Team searched for the missing man on foot, by helicopter and with drones Wednesday afternoon and evening and again this morning.

He was discovered in the woods this morning. No foul play is suspected. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death.

Local musician hits the stage in Palmer

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

PALMER – Local to South Hadley, musician Kyle Ray will be performing for one night only at the Palmer Historical Cultural Center on Saturday, December 28, 2024.

The concert will feature his brand new single, "Shoobox", a song about his life and story, will be performed live for the very first time on a stage, so be

sure to mark your calendar. You can find tickets by scanning the QR code for \$15 ahead of time, or \$20 at the door. The address is 2072 Main Street, Three Rivers, MA 01080.

Don't miss this chance to welcome home a neighbor, and spend some time before the New Year listening to some good music, and hearing for the first time a new song that will end up in your saved playlist.

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Westover Auto Salvage presents at Jabish Brook Middle School

Submitted by Brian Bachand

BELCHERTOWN—On Dec. 11, the 7th Grade Students of Mr. Daniel Baecher's STEM class at Jabish Middle School, were treated to a live presentation of the significance and importance of what they have been learning. Students in Mr. Baecher's class currently have begun to research and construct their own Mini Car, or scale model box car. During their design process and construction, the students are taught fundamental principles that affect the mini car at each function level.

To help his students get a better idea of this process, Mr. Baecher decided to think outside the box by inviting local business Westover Auto Salvage to come present in his class.

Brian Bachand, CEO of Westover Auto Salvage, a family owned business here in Belchertown reached out to Mr. Baecher. "I wanted to reach out and acknowledge Dan's hard work and praise his commitment to creativity and excellence with what and also how he teaches in the classroom. As a business operator here in town, we wanted to see how our business could better help serve the community and lend support to our education system", Brian went on to say.

STEM Class is a class that specializes in the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics or (STEM). STEM is where students learn through an integrated approach that emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving and applying knowledge to real world situations, often through hands-on activities and interactive projects.

A modern take on shop class, STEM Class is boundless in its material yet focused on demonstrating and giving stu-

dents the tools and knowledge needed to decode, dissect and dismantle a subject and be able to understand its composition and then put it back together, or bring it full circle.

In summary, it is a class that shows the what, why and how we apply this type of information and skill set, and the significance of it.

To demonstrate the significance of STEM Class, Bachand and Baecher came up with the idea to bring an example of real world application to the classroom.

"We have started work on our mini cars and are currently covering the principles of propulsion, structure, suspension, linkage and guidance" Baecher previously informed Bachand.

"What if we bring in some auto parts that relate to these concepts, that way the kids can have visuals and have hands-on interactive learning with these parts and see how they relate to what we are doing in class" Baecher then went on to say.

Westover Auto Salvage provided the auto parts for the presentation along with an introduction video, a Spectrum News coverage on the Business. The presentation began in the way that Mr. Baecher's STEM Classes usually begin with, a couple fine tuned dad jokes.

"It was excellent, Dan is a genius, I mean his dad jokes are onpoint whilst

mine are more point and laugh. But the kids either love the joke or they love the cringe effect that these gems seem to elicit", Brian later admitted.

After the quick comedy show, Mr. Baecher introduced Westover Auto's CEO Bachand and showed the class the clip of his business. Brian began by explaining what happens at Westover Auto Salvage and what the business offers the community and its customers.

He then went on to explain the significance of used auto parts and the auto recycling industry.

This included informing students of how Westover Auto creates an outlet for end of life vehicles, reuses, recycles and reconditions all quality used parts, fluids and commodities. Students also learned how using used parts is an eco-friendly and economically favorable alternative to buying new at a fortune cost and a way to decrease one's carbon footprint while increasing support for a circular economy.

However it was when Brian got to parts on the students' tables that the students' interests were really piqued.

Bachand lead on that "We brought in some quality used parts that we sell and went into the what, hows and whys of each part. What each part is. A coil spring to represent suspension or a steering gear rack to exemplify linkage. How each part serves its function on the vehicle and how it is harvested from our end of life vehicles and how it can be reused on another vehicle or recycled. Lastly they addressed why, why it relates to not only the principles Mr. Baecher is covering, but why these parts and principles are so important to what Westover Auto does for work, and also important for the students and their families who have, use or rely on automotive transportation and mechanics".

With these parts debriefed, students were then allowed to handle each part and ask questions.

"We want the students to be able to see the bigger picture of how what we learn in STEM class is all around us on a daily basis and their understanding of what we are learning in the classroom familiarizes them with problem solving, critical

thinking and common sense that is needed and used in and beyond the walls of Jabish Brook", Dan discussed with Brian during the interactive proportion.

Students then inspected and investigated each part and parlayed both Bachand and Baecher with questions such as; what happens if this goes bad, where on the vehicle is this located or how does that come apart? All fielded questions were excellent and thought provoking and led to the students having time to bring out their Mini Cars and present them.

The students demonstrated their progress and designs to Mr. Bachand and gained insight on their cars from suggestions and facts from both their presenter and their teacher.

"I am truly impressed, the ingenuity and the comprehension of these students is very encouraging and that is not only testament to who they are as students, but a reflection of how incredible of a job that Dan is doing as their teacher. He brings energy and engagement to the class, going above and beyond to see that all his students are understanding not only the concepts and the curriculum but also its importance and relativity" Bachand shared upon reflection.

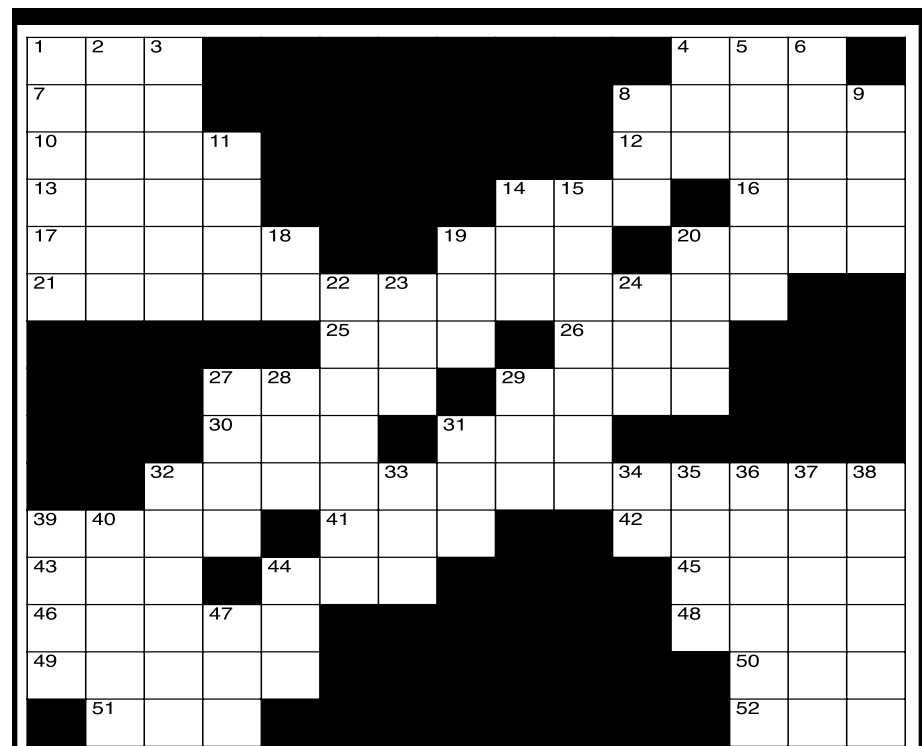
Mr. Baecher concluded that, "it was a pleasure to have Brian present and showcase Westover Auto Salvage and the significance of their business. How they are a certified auto recycler and not a junkyard, and also the importance of auto recycling and bringing to class the real life examples that personify the concepts we are learning about. He was well received by the students and we look forward to partnering up again."

The students will continue to work on their mini cars and will culminate in grading and testing and seeing which cars perform the best. Westover Auto Salvage would like to extend a huge thank you to Mr. Daniel Baecher, Jabish Brook Middle School and its students, for the wonderful opportunity to be able to present, educate and take part in their educational journey.

The business looks forward to further advocacy and future educational benefits and community events. For all your automotive needs, please call 413-323-4210.

In the meantime, Westover Auto encourages all to continue to work hard and allow for education to excel. Help give support and show appreciation for our community's educators wherever and however you can.

Think outside the box and always be willing to learn something new, especially if it is just simply, a sweet dad joke.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Central processing unit
- 4. Taxi
- 7. Body part
- 8. Papal court
- 10. Young women making their public debuts
- 12. Metal shackles
- 13. Joseph's wife
- 14. Licensed professional
- 16. Partner to cheese
- 17. Mild fruits
- 19. File format
- 20. Province of Indonesia
- 21. Beloved grilled foods
- 25. Bar bill
- 26. Don't know when yet
- 27. Whale ship captain

- 29. Touches softly
- 30. Mock
- 31. Red-brown Pacific sea bream
- 32. Summer entertainment options
- 39. Protective crust
- 41. Cool!
- 42. Behave in a way that belittles
- 43. Denial
- 44. A place to sleep
- 45. Electronic counter-countermeasures
- 46. Intestinal pouches
- 48. SE Asia family of languages
- 49. Sound
- 50. Select
- 51. Give the impression of dishonesty

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Of cadmium
- 2. Deliver a sermon
- 3. Inner regions of a shadow
- 4. Aggressive dog
- 5. Smells
- 6. Twofold
- 8. Former OSS
- 9. Computer language
- 11. Indian groom
- 14. Automobile
- 15. Hairstyle
- 18. Atomic #76
- 19. Guy (slang)
- 20. Ladies' undergarments
- 22. Furniture with open shelves
- 23. Back-arc basin
- 24. Partner to flow
- 27. A type of horse

- 28. Possesses
- 29. Split pulses
- 31. Small amount
- 32. Flat-bottomed riverboat
- 33. Not good
- 34. Atomic #31
- 35. Assist in committing a crime
- 36. Chauvinists
- 37. Get away
- 38. One of a people who speaks a Semitic language
- 39. Civil rights college organization
- 40. Combustible dark rocks
- 44. Grocery container
- 47. Central nervous system

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Brice Letendre makes a rebound and heads across the court.



Ian McDonald makes his way down the court.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Orioles begin season 1-2

BELCHERTOWN – After a pair of losses at home against South Hadley and Monument Mountain, Belchertown High School boys basketball was able to get into the win

column with a victory over Hoosac Valley on Dec. 18 80-68. In the victory, Brice Letendre had a huge game with 37 points. Shea MacLean had 15 points and Jacob

Pacunas added 12 points. The Orioles were scheduled to face Granby on Friday, Dec. 27 at 7 p.m., then will be off until Jan. 6 against Easthampton.



Jacob Pacunas works around the perimeter.



Shea MacLean flies for the layup.



Kaden Czaporowski holds the ball back before making a run into the paint.

Rams take charge of Palmer



Gavriel Fernandez sets for the jump shot.

GRANBY – Last Monday night, Granby High School boys basketball grabbed its second win of the season, holding on for a 57-51 win over Palmer. The Panthers kept the game close throughout, but Granby was able to hold its lead late in the game, not allowing the Panthers to grab a lead. The Panthers suffered their first loss of the season while Granby improved to 2-0.

Ryan Colon takes his shot on the hoop.



Riley Goodhind goes for an off-balance shot.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
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Sawyer Clarke flies for a layup.

Belchertown wrestling returns to the mat

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN—A dual wrestling meet was held in the Belchertown High School gymnasium last Tuesday night for the first time since 2016.

The Orioles were trailing, 30-18, against Frontier Regional before taking a six-point lead with the help of three consecutive forfeits by the Red Hawks.

The visitors from South Deerfield did secure a 42-36 victory by recording pins in the

final two matches.

“We’re very happy to have the wrestling program back,” said Orioles wrestling coach Kevin McNeill, who’s also Belchertown’s first-year athletic director. “We also have a youth wrestling program in town and a lot of those wrestlers were here tonight watching the high school kids compete.”

The Orioles began the regular season by competing in a tournament at Holyoke High School

O’Neill was a physical edu-

cation teacher at the Swift River Elementary School before replacing Jennifer Gouvin as athletic director back in August. He has been a wrestling coach at Granby and South Hadley High School’s. He was an assistant wrestling coach at Minnechaug Regional. He also began the Belchertown youth wrestling program a couple of years ago.

“My wife, Joanna, and I, along with several other people, began the youth wrestling program in Belchertown two years ago,” O’Neill added. “We

had 40 kids in the program the first year. We then had 75 kids the second year.”

O’Neill held a meeting with Belchertown High School principal, Christine Vigneux, and the school counsel about bringing back the wrestling program at the high school.

“We met with Mrs. Vigneux and the school counsel at the end of the 2023-24 school year about bringing back the high school wrestling program,” O’Neill said. “We were able to

Please see **WRESTLING**, page 12

HoopHall ceremony announced

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced that the Class of 2025 Enshrinement Ceremony will take place on Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield – the Birthplace of Basketball.

The nominees for the upcoming class were set to be revealed on Thursday, Dec. 19, at 3 p.m. during “NBA Today” on ESPN. The Class of 2025 Finalist

Please see **HOOP HALL**, page 12

SPORTS

Lions get second overtime win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD—The members of the Ludlow varsity hockey team began the 2024-25 regular season by celebrating a pair of overtime victories in a span of 48 hours.

The two overtime goals were scored by junior captains.

Defenseman Sean Kefalas, who recorded a hat-trick in the season opener, netted the game winning goal against Agawam with 39.8 seconds remaining in OT. It gave the Lions a 5-4 victory at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield, last Thursday night.

Two days later, on Saturday, Dec. 14, the Lions returned to Olympia and celebrated another 5-4 overtime win against Berry Division rival Minnechaug Regional. Forward Tanner Severyn scored the game-winning goal with 3:38 remaining in OT. It was a memorable day for Severyn, who celebrated his 17th birthday with a goal and two assists.

“This is the first time that I’ve scored a game winning goal in a varsity hockey game, and it feels great,” Severyn said. “Scoring the game winning goal in overtime is one of the best birthday presents that I could receive.”

It was the first time that Severyn, who’s also a member of the Lions golf team, had played a varsity hockey game on his birthday.

Severyn only played in four varsity hockey games as a freshman before suffering a right knee injury which required season ending surgery. He scored ten goals last season. He scored a goal in the season opening victory against the Brownies. Severyn also has twelve career assists.

Not only did the Lions (2-0) win their first two games of this season in OT, but they also lost their final two games a year ago in overtime.

The Lions lost 3-2 in OT to Taconic in the Western Mass. Class B. finals. Two days later, the Lions lost by the same score in OT to Norton High School in a preliminary round game in the Division 3 state tournament.

“This was our fourth overtime game in a row dating back to last season,” said Ludlow head coach Paul Rivest. “I’m glad that we won today’s game, but we didn’t play particularly well. Whenever we took the lead, we allowed them to score a goal. We can’t afford to keep giving up leads.”

Ludlow is a co-op hockey team for the first time. Seven of the players listed on the



Nick Deroin enters the offensive zone.

Lions hockey roster attend Belchertown High School.

The Belchertown players are freshman Andrew Lambert, senior Charlie Fijal, sophomore William Mitus, senior Owen Hess, sophomore Gavin Harrington, senior Jack Mandeville, and junior Donald Rogers, who was the starting goalie in the first meeting of the regular season against the Falcons (0-1).

Fijal recorded a hat-trick in last Saturday’s game. He also assisted on Severyn’s game win-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Charlie Fijal looks to shoot.

ning overtime goal.

“Charlie is a great hockey player and it’s great playing on the same varsity hockey team with him,” Severyn said. “We were also teammates at the youth level, so I’ve known him for a long time. We probably wouldn’t have had a hockey team this year without the players from Belchertown.”

Ludlow was also moved into the Berry Division, along with Greenfield during the offseason.

“We’ll be playing a much stronger schedule this year, which will help us in the power rankings,” Rivest said. “We’re a Division 3 team and both of our

wins came against Division 2 opponents. We should skyrocket in the state power rankings.”

Minnechaug, who went 11-10 last season, is one of the few Western Mass. hockey teams that hasn’t formed a co-op with another school. The Falcons defeated the Lions, 3-1, a year ago.

The only three seniors listed on the Falcons roster are Ben Daniels, Brayden O’Sullivan, and Matt Beaudin.

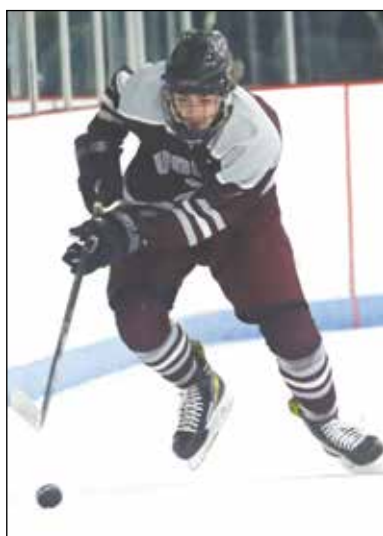
Freshman goalie Matt Lafley was credited with 14 saves in his first varsity start.

The Lions took a 1-0 lead

Please see **LIONS**, page 13



Sean Kefalas approaches the opposing defense.



Evan Dias heads down the ice.



Tanner Severyn maneuvers through traffic.



Mike Rubin attempts to pass up the ice.

HOOP HALL from page 11

Announcement will be Friday, Feb. 14, as part of the NBA All-Star Weekend in San Francisco, and the Class of 2025 will be announced on Saturday, April 5, during the NCAA Final Four Weekend in San Antonio.

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, September 5, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, inclusive of the Class of 2025 jacket and ring presentation and the annual Hall of Fame Awards. The Enshrinement Ceremony will take place the following day in Springfield’s historic Symphony Hall and will be available to a global audience.

A full schedule of events will be announced at a later date.

WRESTLING from page 11

get the program back again and we’re very excited about it.”

Only a couple of the Belchertown wrestlers had ever wrestled in a match before this winter.

“We have twenty student-athletes on the wrestling team, which is phenomenal,” O’Neill said. “Only a couple of them had ever wrestled at the youth level. It’s like having a blank canvas because most of these kids had no idea what they were doing on the first day of practice. The coaching staff does have a lot of experience and we’re going to teach them everything that they need to know about wrestling. It’s been a lot of fun watching them improve a little bit each day. We just want them to enjoy the sport.”

The three seniors listed on the Belchertown wrestling roster are Jack Bergeron, Max Bessette, and Jack Lacroix.

“I give our three seniors a

lot of credit,” O’Neill said. “They’re trying something that they’ve never done before in their final year of high school.”

This past fall, Bergeron was a reserve player on the Orioles boys’ varsity soccer team.

“I’m very glad the wrestling program is back, but I wish I was a freshman” Bergeron said. “Anyone can be a wrestler, and it was something that I really wanted to try. Coach McNeill is an outstanding wrestling coach, and I’ve already learned a lot from him. It has been a lot of fun so far.”

Bergeron was scheduled to compete in the 175 weight class against Frontier, but he won that match by a forfeit. Freshman Ronan Mosher (165), junior Edan Chaverri (126) and Bessette (190) also won their matches by forfeits.

“If you can fill your entire line-up, you’re going to be a very good wrestling team,” O’Neill said. “It’s a challenge, but we just want to get more kids interesting in trying a new

sport.”

The 106 match was declared a no contest because neither team had a wrestler in that weight class.

The only other match forfeited by Belchertown was the 132 weight class.

Belchertown sophomore Andre Jarry (138), who had previously wrestled at the youth level, recorded a pin at 1:32 of the first round. It was the Orioles’ first pin of the match.

“I did wrestle at the youth level for five years,” Jarry said. “I came out strong in the first round and it feels very good to win the first match of my high school career.”

Jarry is looking forward to the dual meet at Pathfinder Tech on January 8. His older brother, Dominic, is a senior on the Pioneers wrestling team.

“I’m really looking forward to that match a lot,” Andre Jarry said. “I won’t be wrestling against my older brother because we’re in different

weight classes. I’m hoping that we can win that match.”

Junior Evan Perkins (150) also pinned his opponent 14 seconds into the opening round, which sliced the Orioles deficit to 24-18.

The other members of the Belchertown wrestling team are freshman James Bentley, freshman Brogan Bottari, freshman Derek DeLorenzo, freshman Grayden Kendall, freshman William Verrochi Jr., sophomore Oliver Hellyar, sophomore Zach Restucci, sophomore Troy Robinson, sophomore Luke Roy, junior Chase Fraga, junior Eli Grillo, junior Alex Maroney, and junior Adam O’Rourke.

The Belchertown assistant wrestling coaches are Bill Verrochi, and Mike Dull.

The Orioles’ only other two home dual meets will be against Longmeadow (Jan 22) and Hampden Charter (Jan. 29).

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SPORTS

T-Birds fall to Checkers on the road

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-10-2-1) fell victim to a two-goal comeback by the Charlotte Checkers (15-6-1-2) last Wednesday night at Bojangles Coliseum in a 4-3 defeat.



The T-Birds did themselves no favors by taking back-to-back penalties just four seconds apart, resulting in 1:57 of two-man advantage time for the league's top power play. Steve Konowalchuk's team dug in, though, as Vadim Zherenko and the penalty killers did the job to survive the lengthy threat.

Charlotte still rode the momentum from the power play to the game's opening tally by Oliver Okuliar at 4:45 of the first period, giving the Checkers a 1-0 advantage.

After the burst from Charlotte, the T-Birds quickly chipped away on the shot board. At 15:00 of the frame, Dalibor Dvorsky brought Springfield even with his team-leading 11th of the season, cashing in on a rebound at the edge of the crease and driving it past former T-Bird Chris Driedger.

The 1-1 score continued for nearly a whole period of game action until the T-Birds' third and fourth units capitalized on back-to-back shifts. Tanner Dickinson started the scoring blitz with a wrist-shot from the left circle that glanced off traffic and eluded Driedger at 14:02 of the second period, making it a 2-1 lead for Springfield.

34 seconds later, Mathias Laferriere and Drew Callin entered the offensive zone on a 2-on-1 and took advantage of the situation. Driedger made an initial pad save off a Laferriere shot from the left circle. However, the rebound kicked right to Callin, who quickly deked to the forehand and put it behind Driedger to give the T-Birds a 3-1 advantage.

Penalties, though, continued to throw a wrench in the T-Birds' plans, and the Charlotte power play finally connected in the final minute of the second as Rasmus Asplund redirected a Trevor Carrick wrist shot behind Zherenko,

chopping the lead to 3-2 at 19:21 of the middle frame.

For a second straight night, rookie Ben Steeves provided a clutch tying marker for Charlotte, taking a feed from Okuliar in the right circle and snapping a shot past Zherenko's stick hand at 3:55 of the third, bringing the game to a stalemate, 3-3.

The two teams did not generate much after the Steeves goal, with the two clubs combining for only eight shots in the entire third period, and the tie score carried into the final three minutes of the game.

Again, discipline proved pivotal, as Tobias Bjornfot drew a high-sticking double minor and a four-minute power play for the Checkers with 2:39 remaining.

The league's top man advantage lived up to their billing in the final minute, as Wilmer Skoog unloaded a blistering one-time slapper that found twine with 54 seconds left to give Charlotte the 4-3 lead. Springfield's last-ditch efforts to tie came up empty in the closing moments, and Charlotte completed the two-game sweep of the T-Birds.

Railers announce major coaching change

WORCESTER — The Worcester Railers Hockey Club (@RailersHC), proud ECHL (@ECHL) affiliate of the New York Islanders (@NYIslanders) and Chief Operating Officer Michael G. Myers have announced that Bob Deraney has taken on a new role within the organization, Head of Scouting, effective immediately. Nick Tuzzolino has been named Head Coach & General Manager of the Worcester Railers.

"Bob has been a part of the Railers family for a number of years," Myers said. "We can't thank him enough for his dedication and commitment to this organization over the past several seasons. We look forward to him continuing to work with the team in this new role."

Tuzzolino becomes the fifth head coach in Worcester

Railers history after serving as General Manager & Associate Head Coach to begin the season. He first came to Worcester in June after he spent the 2023-24 season as assistant coach and director of player development with the Savannah Ghost Pirates. As a defenseman, he played over 500 games professionally between the UHL, IHL, ECHL & American Hockey League from 2007-2023. During his initial retirement, he coached the Buffalo Jr. Sabres of the Ontario Junior Hockey League from 2016-20.

"In his time here, Nick has demonstrated his readiness to lead the team both on and off the ice," Myers said. "He has a wealth of experience in dissecting professional systems and working in pro player development. We're excited for him to take the reins and continue his work on bringing a winning culture to Worcester."

Coaching classes available

Coaches hired after Aug. 1, 1998 are required to take a coaching course to be eligible to coach high school sports in Massachusetts.

According to the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Association, all coaches hired prior to Aug. 1, 1998 are exempt from taking the Fundamentals of Coaching Course. Coaches hired after that and before July 1, 2005 must have completed the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course with the exception of Certified MA teachers.

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2005 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching

Course, and an approved Sports First Aid course.

The NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement must be met through attending an MIAA sponsored Fundamentals of Coaching Class with MIAA Certified Instructors. Must be completed and passed prior to coaching a second year.

The NFHS Sports First Aid may be met by completing on-line courses with the NFHS www.nfhslearn.com. Must be passed prior to coaching a third year.

Additional requirements for all coaches:

Massachusetts requires coaches to be certified in

Please see **CLASSES**, page 15

LIONS from page 12

in the latest meeting with the Falcons following a 5-on-3 power play goal by Fijal with 4:13 remaining in the opening period. The duo of sophomore Evan Dias and Severyn were credited with the assists.

With 58.7 seconds left in the period, Minnechaug junior Dom Fiorentino scored a power play goal on a rebound shot that deflected off Rogers (27 saves).

In the middle of the second period, back-to-back goals from Kefalas and Fijal gave the Lions

a 3-1 advantage.

Minnechaug managed to slice their deficit in half following a goal from sophomore Liam Faneuff with 6:57 left in the second period. Faneuff's linemates, Enzo Hrycay and Jake Moore, who are both juniors, were credited with the assists.

Ludlow entered the third period holding a slim 3-2 advantage.

Less than two minutes into the final period of regulation, a goal by Minnechaug sophomore Ethan Kelliher, which was assisted by freshman Ryan Donovan tied the score for the

second time.

A couple of minutes later, Fijal completed his first hat-trick wearing a Ludlow jersey on a tip-in goal. Severyn was given his second assist of the game on the go-ahead goal.

The score was tied again at 4-4 after Donovan fired a low shot that snuck into the net past Rodgers with eight minutes remaining in regulation.

The Berry Division match-up would remain tied until Severyn became the hero on his birthday a little more than a minute into the overtime period.



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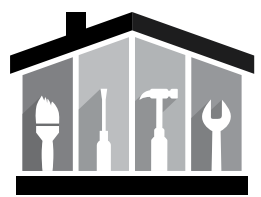
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OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!

SISTERHOOD from page 1

Meetings consists of group sizes from six to twelve ladies, and in the beginning only met once a month, but now they meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 10 a.m.

“Each member brings their own story, experience and enthusiasm to our gathering. We more or less try to decide on a topic prior to getting together,” said Brill.

The group discusses a range of topics together at their meetings, such as aging gracefully, or not so gracefully, memories from their childhood, traditions, differences between then and now like driving, fears, anger, family, or whatever it is they need to talk about with a group of trusted friends.

“When you move to a town in your later years, some of us yearn for friendship and a sense of community,” said Brill. “This is a non-judgmental group and we are here to communicate, find friendship, and support our peers.”

The group works together to ensure that all who come into the group are comfortable and provide a safe place for topics to be discussed with the emotions and wellbeing of their friends.

“The Silver Sisterhood was started to address a need of “finding a place” in the community and I feel we have made a good faith effort to bring a sense of belonging to many,” said Keizer.

“For many years, before we moved here, I was blessed with several wonderful friends who were like family to me,” said Brill. “I missed the strong connection and the activities we shared. The Silver Sisterhood was my attempt to fill this void for myself and others.”

The Silver Sisterhood is designed and meant to help women share each others’ interests, and to treat all who come with respect, and of course, to just enjoy some friend time.

The group shares their interests and concerns with one another, and they are varied and personal to the individuals, which is what makes this group so deeply personal and special: you truly belong there.

“Working’ with Nancy is not work at all! We share similar values including love of family and feel a civic mindedness of giving back to our community and ‘making things better’,” said Keizer.

“Working with Maureen is more than I could have ever asked for. We have developed a friendship because of the Senior Center. Maureen brings kindness, professionalism and compassion to both groups she is involved with,” said Brill.

Keizer and Brill met through attending other programs at the Senior Center, and hope that “our efforts will hopefully encourage others to check out the many programs that the Senior Center offers throughout the year,” said Keizer.

The town of Belchertown truly is community focused, and the Silver Sisterhood is evidence of that, providing space for dedicated friend time, something that we all need.

The Senior Center holds many different events and clubs that help bring you closer to meet new people and build friendships that can last many years to come.

“If anyone would like to join our Silver Sisterhood group, the door is always open. The Senior Center provides many wonderful opportunities to fill a void if you’re looking to meet new people and find a sense of community,” said Brill.

Another group that Nancy and Maureen work on together is the Book Club that meets on the third Monday of the month, which Keizer takes on the mantle of leader.

SEARCH from page 1

Granby Public Schools Director of Finance and Operations Todd Dorman said the range posted last time would be a good start.

“We can verify this. There was some legislature or ruling about salary ranges on Deason job posting,” he said. “We can do ‘commensurate on experience and qualification.’”

Committee loses one, gains another Within the last month, the committee saw Lafond’s appointment and Jill Pelletier’s resignation, effective Dec. 18.

Bartosz said she hopes filling the position will take less than eight months.

Building improvements Dorman also updated the board on the asbestos management program.

“We are, at this time, doing our three-year review of that program and reinspection at the Granby Jr./Sr. High School,” he said. “They’ll make recommendations around the procedures that we do, East Meadow isn’t impacted.”

When the school renovation was done, Dorman said there was nothing specified or used containing asbestos.

However, at the high school, there are floor tiles that have asbestos embedded in them. It is not airborne or something

that poses a threat.

“We are following procedures. We are doing the things we need to do,” Dorman said. “We are training our staff, but it’s time for that reevaluation.”

Bartosz asked about the presentation of any findings from the inspection.

Dorman said things are rated by the most attention needed sooner rather than later.

“Anything that is going to need immediate attention or more timely attention is going to be in it,” he said.

He added that the way that the floor is maintained by staff meets all requirements for keeping everything encapsulated.

He added that he recently met with mechanical engineers and an architect to discuss the timeline for a bid for the kitchen at the high school.

“Our plan is for around Jan. 20. We have our materials posted...having our site walkthroughs at the beginning of Feb. and having bid documents due at the end of Feb.,” said Dorman.

“Our anticipated start date will be June 23.”

The first step will be abating the kitchen then the kitchen renovations will begin.

CLASSES from page 13

CPR per Section 1. Section 47A of chapter 71 of the General Laws. Additionally, AED training is required and will most likely be done in conjunction with the existing mandated CPR training.

All MIAA member school coaches (stipend or volunteer) are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. Rugby Coaches

must see Rule 76.2 for additional coaches’ education information.

Any questions, please call Donna Harrington at 508-541-9804 or email dharrington@miaa.net.

Fundamentals of coaching classes are being offered on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Classes are open until capacity is reached and then a waiting list is established. There are online components to the course once the classroom portion is completed

PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampshire Division Docket No. HS24P0417EA Estate of:

William Henry Vageline Date of Death: 03/25/2023 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Margo J. Vageline of Belchertown, MA**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Margo J. Vageline of Belchertown, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal

Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 12/26/2024

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

EARLY DEADLINE

In observance of **NEW YEAR'S PUBLIC NOTICES** WILL HAVE AN **EARLY AD DEADLINE** Place your public notice no later than **Fri., Dec. 27 Noon** A **TURLEY PUBLICATION** 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 • 413-283-8393 • www.turley.com

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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 \$225, 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.

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Happy New Year!

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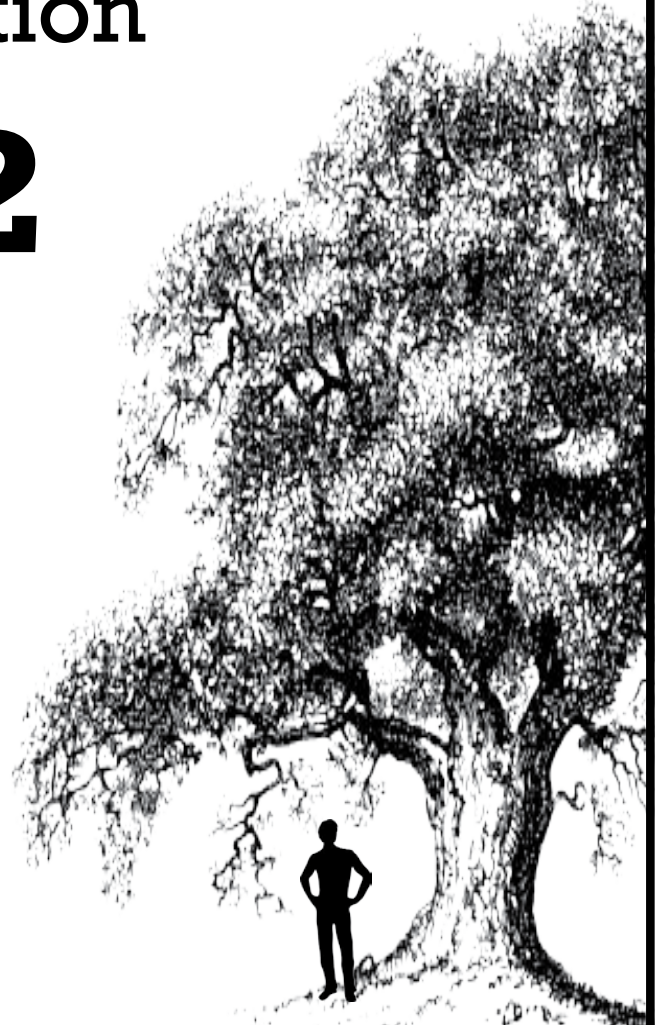
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