

YEAR IN REVIEW 2023 JANUARY

As another year nears its conclusion, we reflect back on those stories that defined 2023. Here is a timeline of the community's most-important stories from the year, from breaking news, the schools, town government, events, and more.



(COURTESY PHOTO)
Kasey Gibbons and Taden Baker are shown at the National Association for Music Education's National Music Ensemble event.

Belchertown students performed in National Honor Ensemble

BELCHERTOWN – At the beginning of the year, local students Taden Baker and Kasey Gibbons worked hard perfecting their musical prowess to compete in the local, state, and national music ensembles.

The National Association for Music Education's 2022 All National Honor Ensemble featured the best, brightest and most talented students from across the country.

In total there were 543 students par-

ticipating in the event, held Nov. 5-6 at National Harbor, Maryland. These two outstanding musicians traveled from Belchertown to Boston, and then to the national competition.

Students were chosen through a comprehensive audition process. It takes training, fortitude and gumption for any musician to be recognized; but to be chosen as one of the 543 performers takes grit and determination.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF MASSWILDLIFE)
Bald eagles have become an increasingly common sight thanks to conservation efforts.

Save the Eagles Day: Efforts to restore bald eagle population paying off

BELCHERTOWN – Jan. 10, 2023, has come and gone, but it's important for this story, as it was National Save the Eagles Day.

The day is set aside to raise awareness about eagles, and to be grateful for the efforts of the conservationists. Here in the Belchertown area, the Quabbin Reservoir, run by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, monitors the eagle population.

According to the information available at the Quabbin Visitor Center, the number of eagles was drastically reduced from hunting and deforestation upon the completion of the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1940s.

Voters approve West Street building project

BY MELINA BOURDEAU
Correspondent

GRANBY – Voters approved a \$5.6 million project to renovate the former West Street School building to be used as municipal offices at the town's Special Town Meeting.

During the meeting, members of the West Street Building Committee spoke to the advantages of the project, which will use 44,000 square feet for existing and potential use for the town offices.

Committee member Micheline Turgeon said the building is currently being used for storage and the town insures the building for \$23,000 annually.

One of the reasons for the project is due to the fact the town is renting the Town Hall Annex building for \$25,000 annually and has 18 months to determine what to do with the offices within the building since the property owner is seeking to sell it.

The town is set to use \$1.8 million in ARPA funds, \$1.4 million in unspent prior general fund articles and \$2.3 million in unspent capital project articles.

The cost of the project includes installation and/or repairs of a sprinkler/fire

protection system, windows and doors, the HVAC system, a water system and PCB and asbestos removal. The funding also covers Owners Project Manager's fees, designer/engineer fees and contingency, according to the future of the West Street building document on the town's website.

There are cost variables including the removal of an underground oil tank and the removal of universal waste and hazardous waste from the building.

However, the benefits of the projects outweigh the risks of higher cost items, according to the voters.

Turgeon said the savings of maintaining one building versus three for maintenance, plowing, heating and more is worth it as well as having a building large enough to suite the town's needs.

"We need a plan for our future and start kicking the can down the road," she said. "It is our opinion that this project will present the town with a building that is completely free of hazardous material, capable housing all existing offices, storage of all documents and records in one location capability of housing addition-

Please see **VOTERS**, page 8

FEBRUARY



(COURTESY PHOTO)
Eagle Scout candidate from Boy Scout Troop 507 Zachary Mavlouganis (center) and his crew of volunteers completed raised planting beds to be donated to the Community Living Center at the Northampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Boy Scout's Eagle project benefits veterans

BELCHERTOWN – At 17 years old, Zachary Mavlouganis from Boy Scout Troop 507 had been nearing the end of his journey to earn the rank of Eagle Scout in February 2023.

On Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023, Mavlouganis gathered a crew of 14 Scouts and adult helpers to build raised planting beds for the Community Living Center at the Northampton Veterans

Affairs Medical Center.

These are not ordinary planting beds; they are specifically designed to be accessible by wheelchair users at the center.

Created using plastic barrels cut in half and mounted on wooden frames, Mavlouganis made sure each planting bed could be comfortably reached from wheelchair level.



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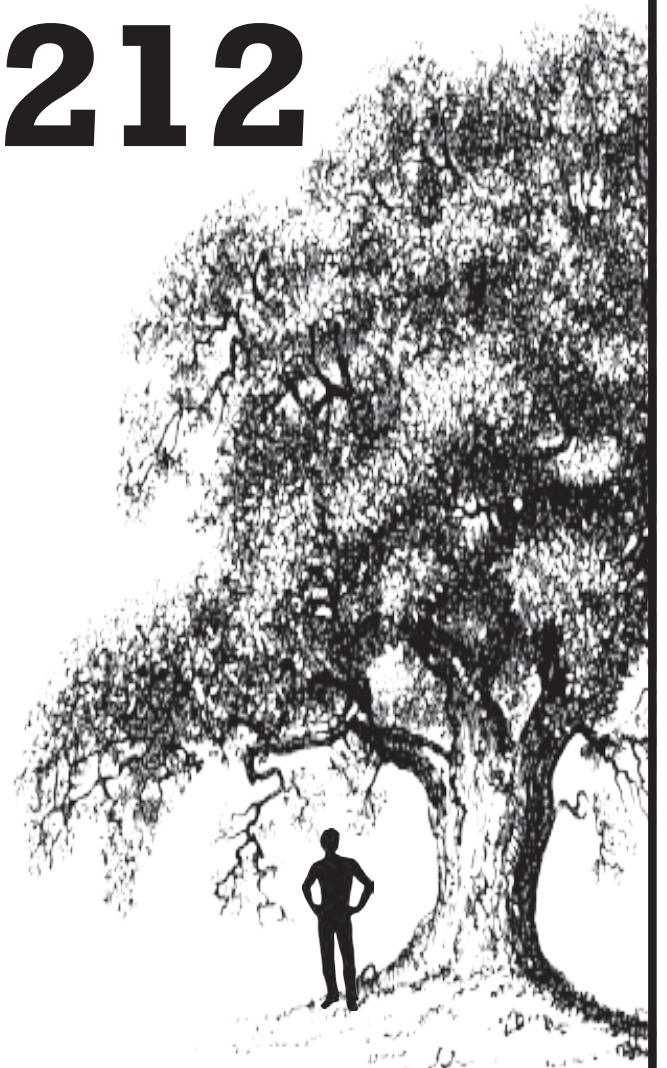
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FEBRUARY



(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTO BY COLETTE LEFEBVRE-DAVIS)

The Belchertown Family Center has created a successful Community Closet since the Toy Swap.

Community Closet opens at Belchertown Family Center

BELCHERTOWN – Belchertown Family Center decided in February 2023 to make the Toy Swap a permanent fixture by creating a Community Closet.

The Community Closet is located at the center and is becoming a very important hub to the community.

When Board Members Natasha

Martin, Nicole Dunham and Courtney Pucel decided to continue the Toy Swap back in January they had no idea that they would be receiving the amount of interest that they have had.

It was an inspiration, and it filled a void that was evident in the community, said Pucel.

Amherst Cinema's hosts 'Frozen' screening and sing-along



(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY COLETTE LEFEBVRE-DAVIS)

Clover, age 5, of Amherst was excited to attend the sold-out sing-along on Saturday at the Amherst Cinema.

AMHERST – While many other events were canceled and rescheduled due to the bitter cold hitting the valley in February 2023, Amherst Cinema did not.

Afterall, sitting in a warm movie theater singing about the cold outside the door is an immersive experience.

The event was a part of Winterfest Amherst, a 15 days of winter celebration. It began on Jan. 28 and will continue until Feb. 11.

Children were excited, some dressed as Elsa, and others as Olaf; however, Elsa was the star at the event. At \$5 a family, the "Frozen" sing-along and move screening quickly sold out.

National LEGO Day celebration:

Clapp Memorial Library hosts LEGO Master Builder

BELCHERTOWN – The Clapp Memorial Library hosted a variety of family-friendly activities in 2023, such as an event in recognition of National LEGO Day, which commemorates the day the creator of LEGO filed for a patent in Denmark.

The library invited children of all ages to attend a LEGO build in the morning through the afternoon, followed by a presentation by Dan the Master LEGO Builder, in the Town Hall.

"Each child who attended the LEGO build earned a raffle ticket," said Jennifer Whitehead, the Children's Librarian. "This is the first year we have done this and even though we didn't have the movie last night we had about 60 people attend the LEGO building earlier."



(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY COLETTE LEFEBVRE-DAVIS)

LEGO Master Builder Dan Steinger instructs the children using a model that a child brought in to show him.

MARCH

Clapp library honors Greg Dillard

BELCHERTOWN – In March 2023, the Clapp Memorial dedicated their recently reopened children's area to longtime volunteer Greg Dillard.

"Greg Dillard volunteered his own time and talents to help build a new Duplo table and a bench for the Children's Area," said Library Director Cyndi Harbeson. "It was a recognition of his work for the library."

Dillard, who has dedicated his time for over 10 years, stepped forward and cut the ribbon at the ceremony on Feb. 21. This symbolic act in itself initiated a new era of playtime and reading fun at the Clapp Memorial Library.

"I work on things every now



(COURTESY PHOTO BY FRAN FERRY)

Clapp Memorial Library Director Cyndi Harbeson and Greg Dillard cut the ribbon during a dedication ceremony of the children's area at the library. The area was dedicated in Dillard's honor.

and then for the library," Dillard said, adding that the library was in need of storage cabinets.




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MARCH

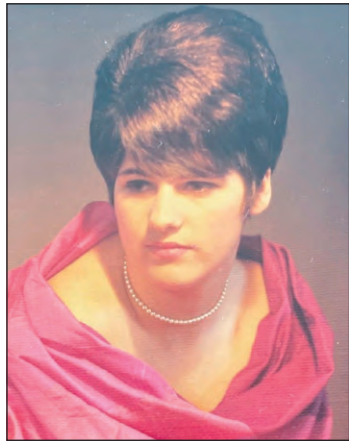
Cold case murder victim 'Granby girl' identified

GRANBY – Officials were one step closer in March 2023 to finding answers to an almost 45-year-old cold case murder, with the identification of the "Granby girl."

At a press conference held at the Granby Police Station, First Assistant District Attorney Steven E. Gagne of the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, revealed that "Granby girl," was identified as 28-year-old Patricia Ann Tucker.

"Nearly 45 years after her death, we've finally identified the young woman whose remains were found here in the woods," Gagne said, crediting the breakthrough to "old-fashioned police work" and "recent advances in forensic genetic genealogy."

Tucker's clothed skeletal remains were discovered on Nov.



(COURTESY PHOTO) "Granby girl" has been identified as 28-year-old Patricia Ann Tucker.

15, 1978, buried under leaves on a logging road off of Amherst Road.

Professor Bugman and his zoo visit Clapp library

BELCHERTOWN – Professor Bugman carried in several containers, hurrying to keep the winter weather off of his precious cargo, in March 2023.

What he carried was the attraction that drew children and their families to the Clapp Memorial Library on Saturday, at an event called "The Arthropod Petting Zoo."

The Professor himself, Bryan Mann, has a background in entomology, earning his master's



(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTO BY COLETTE LEFEBVRE-DAVIS) Professor Bugman, Bryan Mann, holds a millipede up to participants to show the difference between the centipede and millipede.

degree in 2011 from North Carolina University. He brought all of his knowledge and enthu-

siasm to the library as he drew a dark shiny beetle for the children to regard and pet.

APRIL

TA announces early retirement in April 2023

BY MELINA BOURDEAU
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – Town Administrator Gary Brougham

announced earlier this year that he would begin his retirement in early June following a resignation letter to the Selectboard.

Brougham's contract was sup-

posed to end on June 30, but he said he opted to leave early for his mental and physical health. In his March 2023 letter, he said his last day of employment will be on June 3.

"When you have a position like this, it's not a nine to five. It's not Monday through Friday. This just becomes your life," he said. "It's situations like a freeze up at Sportshaven, East Street flooding or winter storms...It's part of your life, a significant part of your life."

In his letter, Brougham said "recent decisions made by some members of the board leave me little to no choice to make this announcement."

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APRIL

Quabbin Visitor Center renaming honors Campbells

BELCHERTOWN – At the close of last year, efforts to rename the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Quabbin Visitor Center were successful

As of April 2023, the Visitor Center is named in memory of two people who dedicated much of their lives to the Quabbin Reservoir, and were key in the creation of the Visitor Center.

The Visitor Center will now be called the Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, and it will be dedicated in their memory at a ceremony on Sunday, June 4 at 1 p.m.

This honor comes two years after Les’ death in 2020 at the age of 95.



(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTO BY PAULA OUIMETTE) Shown from left are Paul Godfrey, Anne Ely and Mark Lindhult standing next to a poster Lindhult made using photos of Les and Terry Campbell, and some of Les’ photos of the Quabbin Reservoir.

His wife Terry, died in 2007 at the age of 66.

“We’ve been working on this for two years,” said Paul Godfrey, board

member of the Friends of Quabbin, Inc., a nonprofit organization with over 300 members across the country.



Nick Boileau and his sister, Erica, are seen here as teenagers. The nonprofit, Nick’s Wave of Changes, was created to keep his memory alive following his death from acute myeloid leukemia.

Nick’s Wave of Changes to hold second spaghetti supper

Sees a year of scholarships, caregiver recognition

BELCHERTOWN – It was a year of progress for the nonprofit Nick’s Wave of Changes, instituting college scholarships for Belchertown graduating seniors and honoring caregivers, and its annual spaghetti supper.

The nonprofit was created to keep Nick Boileau’s memory alive last year in the wake of his death in June 2021 from acute myeloid leukemia. Always

one to try to make the world a better place, his family and friends decided to keep his memory alive by providing scholarship to Belchertown High School seniors and to acknowledge caregivers in the general area.

“He would think this was awesome,” said his sister, Erica Lasewicz, of the scholarships and caregiver awards, and plans for more. “He would be so happy that his memory was being kept alive. He made those waves in his life and even though he’s no longer with us, those changes are still happening.”

Town Hall announces holiday schedule

BELCHERTOWN - The Belchertown Town Hall and the Select Board’s Office at

the Finnerty House will be closing at noon on Friday, Dec. 29, for the New Year’s

holiday. Offices will reopen at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024.





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OPINION



Are spousal benefits always a factor?

Dear Rusty:

Both my wife and I have worked our entire lives.

When we retire, will we both be entitled to full benefit amount each or will there always be a spousal factor in there? Also, how are those benefits calculated – based on your highest salaries throughout your career, or your ending salaries when you retire?

Signed: Looking Ahead

Dear Looking:

Prior to retiring from work is a smart time to investigate how Social Security will fit into your golden years. To answer your second question first, each person's personal SS retirement benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over their entire lifetime, with earlier years adjusted for inflation.

The person's Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, essentially the person's lifetime average inflation-adjusted monthly earnings amount, is first determined.

Using AIME, the person's Primary Insurance Amount is calculated using a special benefit formula which will yield a PIA of about 40% or less of the person's AIME. The PIA is the amount received if benefits start in the month full retirement age or "FRA" is attained, as you can see, Social Security likes acronyms.

Since you and your wife were both born after 1959, FRA for both of you is 67. The age when you claim benefits, relative to your FRA, determines how much you'll get. Claim before FRA and your benefit is reduced; claim after your FRA and your SS retirement benefit will be more (up to age 70 when maximum is reached); claim at your FRA and your benefit will equal your PIA – the full (100%) amount you've earned from a lifetime of working.

Spouse benefits only come into play if the PIA for one of you is less than 50% of the other's PIA. In that case, the spouse with the lower PIA gets a "spousal boost" to their own SS retirement benefit when claimed.

The amount of the "spousal boost" will be the difference between the lower PIA and half of the higher PIA, but the amount of the "spousal boost" (as well as the person's own SS retirement amount) will be reduced if benefits are claimed before full retirement age. Any time SS benefits are claimed before full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

If one spouse is entitled to a "spousal boost" from the other, the spousal amount will reach maximum at the recipient's full retirement age. Thus, if the lower earning partner's highest benefit will be as a spouse, then that spouse should not wait beyond their FRA to claim. If, instead, the lower earning partner's own SS benefit at age 70 is more than their spousal amount, waiting longer than FRA to claim could be prudent, depending on life expectancy.

So, as you can see, deciding when to claim Social Security benefits should consider many things, including financial need, work status if claiming before FRA, marital status and life expectancy. But it is your lifetime earnings which determines your SS retirement benefit amount, and it is how your FRA entitlements compare to each other that determines whether spousal benefits will be paid.

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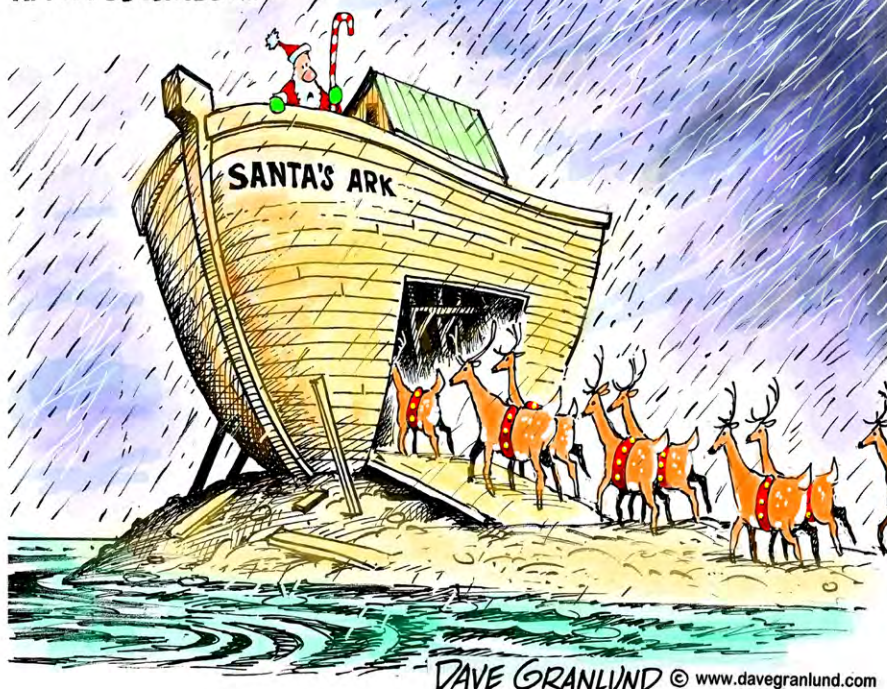
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RAINY DECEMBER...



LETTERS

Thank you to all the Belchertown volunteers

Dear Editor,

As we come to the close of 2023 and reflect on all the activities that made it so full, we want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the Belchertown residents who have volunteered their time and offered their wisdom to the organizations and events that make this town shine. We are grateful for your energy and support for Belchertown. We have the privilege of serving a town where there are too many

organizations and activities to list. Your efforts are seen and appreciated. Thank you.

Have a warm and wonderful close to this year, we look forward to making another bright and bountiful new year alongside you, our dedicated residents.

With much gratitude,

Steve Williams, Town Administrator and the Belchertown Selectboard

'There's Snow Place Like Home' a success

Dear Editor,

The Granby Free Public Library would like to express our gratitude to all of the businesses and neighbors for taking part in our "There's Snow Place Like Home Snowman Scavenger Hunt," for both giving a temporary home to one of our Library Snowmen and for the kind donations of prizes for our winners. This event and their

participation has once again brought joy to our community members, both young and old.

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Kissinger left complex foreign policy legacy

Possibly no one had more influence on American foreign policy in the late 20th century than Henry Kissinger, who died last month at age 100. In his long and active career, he advised presidents, carried out policies and initiatives, and was a highly visible figure around the world.

While it's early to pronounce judgment on his legacy, it's clear that his impact is deeply mixed. His accomplishments were both positive and negative. He was respected and he was reviled.

Kissinger is the only person to have served as national security adviser and secretary of state at the same time, positions he held in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He was brilliant and secretive, and he wasn't much focused on the human cost of his policies.

He was interested in strategy, not values.

He showed little interest in democratic governance or transparency. A creature of the executive branch, he seemed to almost scorn the idea of three separate and coequal branches of government.

You sometimes got the impression he had contempt for Congress.

I was not close to Kissinger, but our paths did cross on foreign policy matters. I served in Congress, and we approached policy from different perspectives.



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Rep. Lee H. Hamilton is shown shaking hands with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in this circa 1969 photo; with Rep. William Broomfield in the background.

Coincidentally, we were both connected to the commission that investigated the 9/11 attacks.

Kissinger was the original pick to chair the group, and former Sen. George Mitchell was to be vice chair. Both stepped down because of perceived conflicts of interest.

Former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean chaired the 9/11 Commission, and I was vice chair.

Kissinger's view of the world, which he characterized as sober realism, may have been influenced by his background as a Jew who spent his childhood in Nazi Germany, before his family fled and settled in New York. He was a very talented man and, wherever he went, in academic, policy circles and government, he rose to power very quickly.

In the 1970s, Kissinger was widely praised for his diplomatic work. When he was named secretary of state in 1973, a Gallup Poll found him to be the most respected man in the world.

Please see **HAMILTON**, page 14

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MAY

Belchertown High School presents 'Once'

BELCHERTOWN – Parents and community members congregated in the Belchertown High School auditorium in May 2023 to witness a student production of the musical “Once.”

As the end of the school year drew nearer, Belchertown High School’s drama and music departments were set to showcase their version of the musical “Once.” A collaboration between students and faculty alike, the play featured wonderful acting, choreography, singing and music.

“Once,” a play by Edna Walsh, tells the enchanting tale of a Dublin street musician who’s about to give up on his dream of making it big in New York City when a beautiful young woman takes a sudden interest in his haunting love songs.



The cast poses for a commemorative photo with Director Josh Guerraz and Co-Director Mrs. Leighton.

(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTO BY MATTY ANDERSON)



‘Stealth’ candidate Steve Williams steals show

DPW Director appointed next TA

BELCHERTOWN – After interviewing three candidates, the Belchertown Selectboard unanimously opted for a fourth, Department of Public Works Director, Steve Williams, in May 2023.

He became the town’s first new Town Administrator in over two-and-a-half decades, replacing long-time Town Administrator Gary Brougham. Brougham retired in early June.

The search for a new Town Administrator included a \$10,000 allocation to hire Community Paradigm Associates, a consulting firm, to help with the search.

A screening committee narrowed the search down from 20 candidates to three, each of whom was interviewed last Tuesday.

Scott Szczebak, Thomas Guerino and Brian Domina were each interviewed for an hour. At the end of the evening, the board opted to wait to decide until its meeting on Monday, May 1.

Szczebak currently serves as director of human resources in Wellesley, Guerino as the executive director of the Greenfield Housing Authority and Domina as the town administrator in Whately.

Beginning their deliberation, Selectboard member Ron Aponte reviewed each candidate’s strengths and weaknesses.

Umbrella of wellness keeps Belchertown residents dry from drug abuse’s reign of terror

BELCHERTOWN– Chestnut Hill Community School hosted the second annual Umbrella of Wellness Fair in May 2023.

The Umbrella of Wellness Fair is a collaborative event organized by the Belchertown Overcoming Addiction Together committee and the Belchertown Drug-Free Communities’ Program Director Kris Hoag. The event was entirely free to the public and family-friendly. Food trucks provided light meals, and fun and engaging activities raised the community consciousness about addiction.

Since last year the event has more than doubled in size. It featured booths and tables set up by fifty-five nonprofit organizations, a free raffle giveaway supported by donations from forty-five local businesses and activities hosted by the Belchertown Recreation



Alene Motta and Linda Alleman, working the front desk.

(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS, PHOTO BY MATTY ANDERSON)

Department.

The mission of the Umbrella of Wellness Fair is “the augmentation of holistic well-being within the community through education, engagement, and

empowerment.” It accomplishes this mission by creating an environment that educates the community on addiction prevention, treatment, recovery and mental wellness.

Boscher elected as chair in Selectboard reorg

BELCHERTOWN – Following the annual town election, the Selectboard reorganized and Selectboard Chair Ed Boscher was appointed to the position in a three to two vote.

Selectboard members Jen Turner, Lesa Lessard Pearson and Ed Boscher were in favor and members Peg Louraine and Ron Aponte were opposed.

During the discussion of the next chair, Selectboard members discussed the tradition of electing the former vice chair as the chair of the board. In the last iteration of the board, former member Jim Barry served as chair and Aponte as vice chair.

Louraine nominated Aponte to be the next chair of the board, which was seconded by Aponte.

Turner nominated Boscher to be the next chair of the board.

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JUNE



Cherishing the departed and the missing:

(TURLEY PUBLICATIONS, PHOTO BY CRISTAL WHELAN) The official Color Guard: Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, L.A. Tiff, Camp 15, SUVCW came from Springfield for the town's Memorial Day ceremony.

Memorial Day draws crowds

BELCHERTOWN - The Memorial Day service this year began at South Cemetery with a salute to all the veterans interred there. About twenty guests were present for this 15-minute ceremony.

The Official Color Guard, assumed by the Sons of the Union Veterans of the

Civil War, L.A. Tiff, Camp 15, SUVCW, had come from Springfield to spend Memorial Day in Belchertown.

Michelle Grube, a new pastor at the Hope United Methodist Church, offered an opening prayer that reaffirmed the essence of the day: "They gave the ultimate sacrifice," she said of those killed in action.

Christopher Heights celebrates its fifth anniversary:

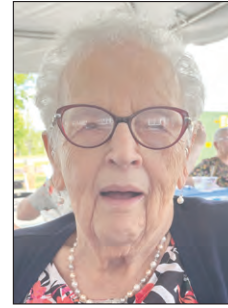
Assisted-living community thriving

BELCHERTOWN - "I'm not the oldest. We have one lady who is 102, and another 101," said 97-year-old Ann Genero at the fifth anniversary celebration for the opening of Christopher Heights in Belchertown in June 2023.

Christopher Heights assisted living facility formed part of a larger project for rejuvenating the former state school property. The town was awarded a \$3 million state grant through MassWorks

Infrastructure to develop a mixture of residential, commercial and recreational development. Walter Ohanian, CEO of the Grantham Group, LLC, expressed his indebtedness to Gary Brougham, town administrator at the time, and Claire O'Neill, project coordinator of MassDevelopment, for being advocates in his development of Christopher Heights.

Addressing guests and residents on this joyous occasion, Ohanian said, "It's wonderful to see another beautiful June day here. When I first visited, it was just a piece of land with a hope. This facility stands exactly where the old hospital used to be."



Ann Genero



Christopher Heights Belchertown celebrates its fifth anniversary with the Decades Band providing entertainment.

VOTERS from page 1

al office space for town growth, capable of conducting town elections and town meetings, providing a safe location for seniors and all their needs, make it easier for companies and contractors to conduct business in town."

One important aspect of the project, which was described by Finance Committee Chair John J. Libera Jr. as four projects wrapped into one, is the removal of a single wall oil tank.

"That's the first thing they're going to do before they do any-

thing else is start drilling holes around to find out whether or not there's any leakage from that tank," he said.

The second, third and fourth parts, so to speak, are the relocation of the offices from the Town Hall Annex building, consolidation of all the offices in one place in Granby and using funds that were already allocated by the town rather than having to raise taxes.

Resident Heather Howes asked if the oil tank project was more expensive than the town anticipated, what would happen to the funding.

"Are these funds then allocated all towards the oil tank is it stopped and then there's another vote?" she asked.

West Street Building Committee member Kevin O'Grady said yes, and "then we'll come back and say okay, this is what we cost for the tank and see what we have left and try to do what we can with the project or start back at square one."

Resident David LaPlante asked where the funding would come from for the offices.

Turgeon answered that the offices will be moving their own furniture.

"We just have to renovate the room itself. Like I said, light, paint, what is required and maybe some walls or space like that, but they're bringing other things with them," she said.

In opposition of the project included proposals to use request the residents propose ARPA projects and use the ARPA funding for the oil tank removal.

There were questions regarding using funds for the Granby Jr. Sr. High School, but members of the Finance Committee said if the town were to spend over 30 percent project fund limitation that would trigger state require-

ments to renovate the building to become ADA compliant.

There was an attempt to amend the article made by resident Lisa Petraglia, who proposed using the ARPA funds to remove the oil tank and hire a designer.

Town Moderator Lynn Mercier said the amendment was outside of the scope of the project and outside the description, so it couldn't be considered.

Discussion on the project was ended after a resident proposed calling the questions and voters approved the article with a simple majority.

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JUNE



(SUBMITTED PHOTO BY MARC BARRETTE)
Tegan Mannino (left), the technology librarian at The Clapp Memorial Library in Belchertown, sets up an exhibit of LGBTQ books at the Belchertown Pride Flag-Raising Ceremony.

Pride Flag-Raising Ceremony

BELCHERTOWN - Filling the Town Hall auditorium to capacity, over 100 people, from two to 94, attended Belchertown's second annual Pride Flag-Raising Ceremony in June 2023.

People just kept pouring into the auditorium. They arrived with so much enthusiasm and then the size of the turnout sparked even more excitement and energy. As the Pride Flag-Raising Ceremony coordinator and co-founder of Belchertown Pride this was a great moment.

In response to the large crowd, Belchertown High School student Daniel

Cormier said, "I was very surprised because I expected a small turnout, maybe more kids from the high school. However there were many older folks and it really made me emotional."

The program included guest speakers Representative Aaron Saunders, Chief of Police Kevin Pacunas, Select Board member Lesa Lessard Pearson, and the 2023 LGBTQ+ Honoree, Bonnie Strickland. The Clapp Memorial Library had a large exhibit of LGBTQ+ books and there was a dedicated table with free souvenirs sponsored by several local banks.

JULY

Family center closed by Selectboard

BELCHERTOWN - Following "a very difficult discussion," the Selectboard voted to close the building housing the Belchertown Family Center on 51 State St. in July 2023.

Town Administrator Steve Williams began the discussion stating that he has been and continues to be a supporter the Family Center, but that the building is not safe.

"Six months ago, in my role at the DPW, we spend a considerable amount of time trying to address the roof leaks," he said. "We prepared a lengthy capital improve-

ment plan for that building."

These improvements included the roofing, windows, siding and a furnace.

He said they did everything to stop the roof leaks, but earlier in July, a leak was discovered, and it is unknown where it's coming from.

"We've exhausted all our efforts to repair that. It's time to replace the roofing," he said.

Later, the Belchertown Family Center Committee contacted Williams to tell him that the ceiling was wet.

The new face of the Clapp Memorial Library, Cyndi Harbeson

BELCHERTOWN - Cyndi Harbeson is the new face of the Clapp Memorial Library.

As of June 13, Harbeson has acted as the library's director, and with her she brings a strong background in history to the table. Considering the historic architecture of the library, having a strong understanding and respect for its history is crucial.

Harbeson previously worked at the Jones Library in Amherst as the head of Special Collections. "I basically curated a collection at the library for historians to utilize," she said.

As for her transition into her role as director, she added, "It was a big shift, I had my start in a library working in



(TURLEY PHOTO BY MATTY ANDERSON)

Special Collections, but there was a bit of a learning curve to help get things up and running again after Covid. Thankfully, the staff here is amazing."



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JULY



Susan Canning, Shannon LaPlante, Tyler LaPlante, Kyle Thibeault and Steve Williams are shown alongside the members of the Fire Department and Police Department.

TURLEY PHOTO BY MATTY ANDERSON

Recreation department receives AED donation

BELCHERTOWN – Susan Canning, director of KEVS Foundation, Inc. made a donation in July 2023 that continued to honor the late Kevin J. Major, while providing a lifesaving resource for the town.

On July 19, Canning donated an AED to Belchertown, at the Chestnut Hill Recreation Area on

State Street.

“Cardiac arrest doesn’t just happen with older adults, it happens to kids and athletes as well, we saw that with the Buffalo Bills,” she said. “This isn’t a replacement to the firefighters, police and EMTs, you guys are crucial.”

JULY CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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Brenna Moreno flies for the layup.

Rams win third straight

GRANBY – After a loss to start the season, Granby girls basketball has won three straight, including a 38-31 triumph over Ware High School on Tuesday, Dec. 19. The Rams slowed down scoring a bit in the second half, but their defense held up after building a good lead in the second quarter. Granby was led by Aubrey Parent with 12 points followed by Autumn Sicard with a 10-point performance. Granby was off for the holiday vacation and returns to action on Jan. 4.



Eleanor Szlosek eyes the hoop before shooting.



Myline Laliberte goes for long-range jump shot.

Agawam offense too much for Orioles

BY TIM PETERSON
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM—The last time that the Agawam girls' varsity basketball team began the regular season with a 3-0 record was six years ago.

The Brownies opened the 2017-18 regular season with victories against Westfield, East Longmeadow, and West Springfield before suffering a home loss to Springfield Central.

A year ago, Agawam won its first two games of the season versus Ludlow and Westfield before losing to Central Division rival Belchertown by ten points on the road.

After kicking off the 2023-24 regular season with a pair of wins against Drury (45-37) and Pope Francis (40-39), the Brownies once again faced Belchertown in their third game.

Unlike a year ago, the Brownies improved to a perfect 3-0 following a 62-36 victory over the Orioles at Cliff P. Kibbe Gymnasium, last Tuesday night.

"We've played very well so far this season and I'm hoping that it continues," said Agawam head coach Tim Murphy. "Because our first two games were very close, we couldn't play very many players. We were able to play everyone in

tonight's game, which was very nice. A couple of players scored their first career points in a varsity game."

It has been more than 15 years since the Agawam girls' basketball team, who also had a 3-0 league record, won its first four games of the regular season.

A total of eleven players scored at least two points for the home team in the first meeting of the season against the Orioles (1-2, 0-2).

Please see **ORIOLES**, page 12



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY SCIBELLI

Chloe LaRoche tries to keep the ball inbound.



Logan Moses goes for the close-range shot.



Alexa Karabestos looks for a teammate to inbound the ball to.



Morghan Litz gets ready to make another pass.

Amherst keeps Chicopee co-op winless



Stephen Samson tries to clear the defensive zone.

AMHERST – Last Monday at Orr Rink, Amherst Regional hockey defeated Chicopee 6-1. The Pacers, which now have a five-school co-op that includes Chicopee Comprehensive, South Hadley, Granby, and the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School, is 0-3 to start the season but did score its first goal of the season in the first period of the contest. Chicopee's co-op was scheduled to host the Holiday Classic mini-tournament at Fitzpatrick Rink in Holyoke earlier this week. Agawam and Gardner were among the scheduled participants in the tournament.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

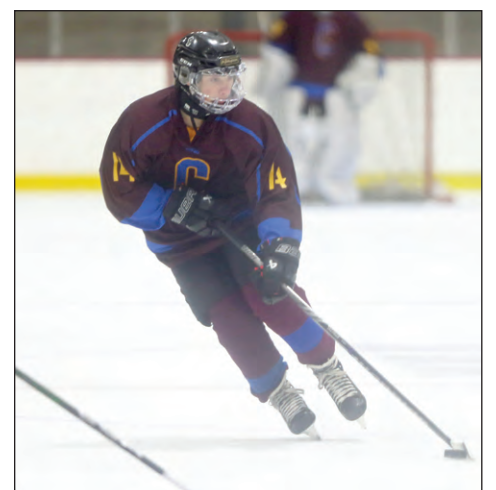
Connor McDonell, of Granby, goes after a puck behind the goal.



Mike Beaulieu is pressured near the boards.



Caleb Lundgren holds the puck looking to make a pass.



Alex Rachele makes his way up the ice.

SPORTS

Granite State announces Pro Stock Series 2024 schedule

WALPOLE, N.H. – Granite State Pro Stock Series officials announced Friday the schedule of events for the 2024 racing season. The series slate includes a nine-race championship battle spread from May to October, with the championship event taking place at Lee USA Speedway's Octoberfest weekend.

The Granite State Pro Stock Series will visit five different tracks in 2024: Lee, Star Speedway, Claremont Motorsports Park, Riverside Speedway and Speedway 95. The schedule begins with the annual 100-lap spring event at Star Speedway in Epping, New Hampshire, this year on Saturday, May 4 with a Friday night practice on May 3. From there, teams will roll to Claremont Motorsports Park for the Memorial Day weekend, with a main event set for Sunday, May 26.

On Saturday, June 8, the series will make the first of two visits to Lee USA Speedway. That will be followed by the first of two races at Hermon, Maine's Speedway

95 on Saturday, June 16. After a few weeks off, the schedule continues with a return to Claremont for Independence Day weekend on Friday, July 5 with a special event.

The high-banks of Hudson International Speedway will host the series again on Sunday, July 14, while Riverside Speedway returns to the schedule with an event on Saturday, August 10. The final two events of the year will take place at Speedway 95 on Sunday, September 15 and Lee's Octoberfest weekend, where the champion will be decided, on Saturday and Sunday, October 5-6.

"Our 2024 schedule is shaping up to be one of the best in our history," Mike Parks, President of the Granite State Pro Stock Series, said. "Return trips to places like Star, Speedway 95, Lee USA and Riverside, mixed with us getting back on the high-banks of Hudson, will produce an exciting championship battle for fans to follow during the summer of 2024."

Additional information regarding the 2024 Granite State Pro

Stock Series schedule including event registrations, rules and more will be available soon. For the latest news, fans and teams are encouraged to visit gpsss.net and follow the series on social media.

2024 Granite State Pro Stock Series Schedule

Saturday, May 4 - Star Speedway - Epping, N.H.

Sunday, May 26 - Claremont Motorsports Park - Claremont, N.H.

Saturday, June 8 - Lee USA Speedway - Lee, N.H.

Sunday, June 16 - Speedway 95 - Hermon, Maine

Friday, July 5 - Claremont Motorsports Park - Claremont, N.H.

Sunday, July 14 - Hudson International Speedway - Hudson, N.H.

Saturday, August 10 - Riverside Speedway - Groveton, N.H.

Sunday, September 15 - Speedway 95 - Hermon, Maine

Saturday/Sunday October 5-6 - Lee USA Speedway, Lee, N.H.

Olympic team among eligible Hall candidates

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the list of eligible candidates for the Class of 2024, including several high-profile, first-time nominees, including the 2008 U.S. Olympic Men's Basketball Team ("Redeem Team"), Vince Carter, Seimone Augustus, Bill Laimbeer, Rick Barnes, Mike Fratello and Penny Taylor.

A first look at the list of eligible nominees will be provided by "NBA Today" on ESPN, hosted by Malika Andrews, with Class of 2023 Hall of Famer Becky Hammon, Kendrick Perkins, Chiney Ogumike, and Brian Windhorst. A complete list of eligible candidates can be found below.

Finalists from the Honor's Committee for the Class of 2024 will be announced on Friday, February 16, in Indianapolis, Indiana, during NBA All-Star Weekend.

The entire Class of 2024 will

be unveiled during the NCAA Final Four in Phoenix, Arizona, on Saturday, April 6, in a nationally televised broadcast.

The announcement time and broadcast network for both the Finalist and the Class Announcement will be announced in the near future.

Enshrinement weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, August 16, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, followed by the Enshrinement ceremony on Saturday, August 17, at Springfield's historic Symphony Hall.

VIP Packages for the Hall of Fame Enshrinement Weekend will go on sale on Friday, February 16. All single-event tickets to the Ceremony, Tip Off Celebration, and Awards Gala, as well as other ancillary events, will go on sale on Saturday, April 6, at 12:00 p.m. EST. All packages and tickets will be available for purchase at hoophall.com.

The complete listing of events and pricing will be released by Feb. 1.

The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame also announced changes to its election process that will more carefully examine candidates from the International, Men's Veteran's, Women's Veteran's, and Contributor Committees. Since 2011, the Hall of Fame has allowed these categories to be stand-alone 'direct-elect' committees with the objective of ensuring candidates who may have 'fallen through the cracks' received focused and specialized consideration in these various categories. The Election Process Committee has determined that this objective of more acute consideration has been met during this 12-year period, and now candidates put forth from these categories will revert back to the previous and traditional process of being presented for final consideration to the Honors Committee for election.

T-Birds coach gets call to NHL, named interim coach of Blues

Daniel Tkaczuk will take over as interim head coach in Springfield

SPRINGFIELD – On Dec. 13, St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced the team has relieved Craig Berube of his coaching duties and named Springfield Thunderbirds head



coach Drew Bannister interim head coach. Bannister will travel to St. Louis on Wednesday and serve his first game behind the bench on Thursday when the Blues host the Ottawa Senators.

Bannister, 49, has spent the past three seasons with the Blues' AHL affiliate in Springfield, leading the team to a 93-58-19 regular-season record. The Belleville, Ontario, native has also guided the Thunderbirds to consecutive playoff appearances, including 2021-22, when they won the Eastern Conference and reached the Calder Cup Final.

Bannister began his coaching career in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), where he spent three seasons as an assistant with Owen Sound and three as head coach with the Soo Greyhounds. He also served as head coach of the AHL's San Antonio Rampage and as an associate coach with the Utica Comets. As a player, Bannister's career spanned over 20 years and included 164 NHL regular-season games between the Tampa Bay Lightning, Edmonton Oilers, Anaheim Mighty Ducks, and New York Rangers.

In addition, Thunderbirds general manager Kevin Maxwell has

announced that Daniel Tkaczuk will take over the head coaching duties in Springfield on an interim basis.

Tkaczuk, 44, joined the St. Louis Blues organization in 2016 as an assistant coach with the club's AHL affiliate, the Chicago Wolves. After spending the 2017-18 season as a Skills Coach with the Blues, he rejoined the AHL affiliate as an assistant coach under Bannister in 2018, a role he has held ever since, including a promotion to Associate Head Coach in 2022.

The Toronto, Ontario native began his coaching career in the OHL as an assistant coach with the Owen Sound Attack from 2011-15 before spending the 2015-16 season with the Kitchener Rangers. Tkaczuk and Bannister were co-assistant coaches with Owen Sound from 2012-15.

Tkaczuk was the sixth overall draft pick in the 1997 NHL Draft by the Calgary Flames and played 12 professional seasons in both North America and Europe. As a member of the Saint John Flames, Tkaczuk captured a Calder Cup championship in 2000-01. He was tied for second among Flames skaters with 10 goals in the Calder Cup Playoffs that season.

In 286 AHL games with Saint John, the Worcester IceCats, Bridgeport Sound Tigers, Charlotte, Syracuse, Rochester, and Hartford, Tkaczuk posted 59 goals and 109 assists for 168 points. He was a career point-per-game performer in the playoffs, scoring 14 goals and adding 17 assists in 29 career Calder Cup playoff contests. Tkaczuk also skated in 19 NHL games with Calgary, putting up 11 points (four goals, seven assists) in the 2000-01 season.

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Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow

and share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

ORIOLES from page 11

The trio of junior Marlee Montagna, junior Mia Canavan, and sophomore Bella Laprise, who are starters, led the way offensively for the Brownies.

Laprise scored nine of her game-high 15 points during the second half. She also scored a team-leading 17 points in the Brownies 40-39 win at Pope Francis four days earlier.

Montagna and Canavan chipped in with 11 points apiece against Belchertown. Canavan recorded a double-double with 15 rebounds.

Agawam's other two starters were junior Katelyn Cleavall (8 points) and sophomore Sophia Laprise (4 points).

"Everybody shot the ball very well in tonight's game," Murphy said. "I don't have very many complaints offensively."

Sophomore Carly Calabrese (3 points) and senior Amber Bates (2 points) scored their first varsity



Laura Cote holds the ball outside the arc.

points in the fourth quarter.

Bates is the only senior listed on the Agawam varsity roster.

"Amber is a great kid, and she knows her role on the team," Murphy said. "She's a very good

softball player and enjoys playing basketball. She's one of our leaders."

The Orioles, who had won the previous three games in the series, didn't play very well in their third road game.

"You just have to give Agawam a lot of credit. They played very well, and we didn't," said Belchertown head coach Jason Woodcock. "There are eleven players on our team and only two of them have any experience at the varsity level. We made a lot of mistakes, but this was a good learning experience for us. We do have a couple of weeks off now and it'll give us some extra practice time."

Junior Chloe LaRoche, who scored seven of her team-high 11 points after halftime, and senior Laura Cote (5 points) are the only experienced varsity players for the Orioles.

LaRoche, who didn't play in the Orioles season opening loss at Pope Francis because of an injury, scored 18 points in a blowout win

at Mount Greylock on Dec. 15.

One of the five freshmen listed on the Orioles varsity roster is Morghan Litz, who scored eight points against the Brownies. Sophomore Alexa Karabetsos added six points.

The Orioles, who held the lead a couple of times early in the contest, were trailing 12-8 with a little more than a minute remaining in the first quarter following a Litz lay-up.

In the closing seconds of the opening quarter, Montagna buried a 3-pointer from the left side.

Cleavall made another 3-pointer from the top of the key less than a minute into the second quarter pushing the Brownies lead into double digits (18-8) for the first time.

With less than two minutes remaining in the first half, Agawam, who forced more than 25 turnovers, built a 30-12 lead following a lay-up by Bella Laprise.

Field goals by Karabetsos and freshman Isabella Vozzella (2

points) did close the gap to 30-16 at halftime.

The Brownies, who led by as many as 19 points in the third quarter, entered the final eight minutes of the contest holding a 41-23 advantage.

The Orioles managed to slice their deficit down to 48-35 with 3:40 remaining in regulation following a Karabetsos lay-up and a made free throw from LaRoche.

"I think the next time that we play Belchertown, it'll probably be a much closer game," Murphy said. "They're a young team, but they never stopped playing hard. Coach Woodcock is also a very good basketball coach."

The Brownies closed out the game with a 14-1 run with the help of eight free throws.

The second meeting of the regular season between the Central Division rivals is scheduled to take place on Jan. 18 at Belchertown High School.

JULY

Expansion of the Lake Wallace Sensory Trail

BELCHERTOWN – In July 2023, State Senator Jake Oliveira and State Representative Aaron Saunders presented Doug Albertson, Town Planner for the town of Belchertown, Town Administrator Steve Williams, and members of the Belchertown Select Board with a cere-

monial check to celebrate funds to support the expansion of phase 2 of the Lake Wallace Sensory Trail in Belchertown. The presentation recognized the 55,550 dollars secured by Oliveira’s amendment number 262 of the Economic Development Bill passed in the fall.

AUGUST

‘Julia’s 3v3 Jamboree’ event in August 2023

BELCHERTOWN – A soccer jamboree held in August not only honored the memory of a 14-year-old resident who lost her battle with brain cancer this year, but also established a scholarship fund in her name.

The Julia Haynes 3v3 Soccer Jamboree is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, August 20, at the State Street fields in Belchertown.



COURTESY PHOTO
A soccer jamboree was held to establish a scholarship fund in the name of 14-year-old Belchertown resident Julia Haynes, who lost her battle with brain cancer this year.

Where are we now?



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Current water buildup at previous dam site.

A two-year anniversary reflection on the Belchertown flood of July 2021

BELCHERTOWN - In the early morning hours of July 18, 2021, more than two inches of rain and flash flooding upstream caused a beaver dam to burst on the Herman Covey Wildlife property in Belchertown.

This, in turn, sent rushing water to near-by East Street. The cascading force burst the culvert beneath the street and cut a

crater in the road measuring nearly 20 feet long by 15 feet deep.

From there, the waters traveled downhill submerging several residential properties in its path. This July 18, 2023, marked the second anniversary of a disaster that left private property owners with tens of thousands of dollars in damage, some of which had yet to be resolved in July.



‘National Night Out’ held

BELCHERTOWN – In August, the police department hosted its “National Night Out” event to promote police-community partnerships.

The event, which police said was an opportunity to meet community members and introduce themselves and their public safety partners, featured a Lifeflight helicopter show, a magic show, a K-9 unit demonstration, activities, vendors, giveaways, and much more.

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Belchertown Voices for Justice to host conversation with Holocaust Survivor

BELCHERTOWN – At 7 p.m. on Jan. 4, 2024, Belchertown Voices for Justice (BVJ) will host a conversation with Holocaust survivor and Civil Rights activist Marione Ingram titled “A Community Conversation Toward Peace in the Middle East.”

The 90-minute program will be held via Zoom with registration required and will include an opportunity for questions from the audience, a press statement reads.

“Ms. Ingram is the author of two memoirs, the New York Times–bestselling ‘Hands of War’ about her experiences during the Holocaust and a sequel focused on her work during the Civil Rights era titled ‘Hands of Peace,’” the press statement reads. “Born in Hamburg, Germany to a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father, she witnessed the deportation in 1941 of many family members and thousands of other Hamburg Jews to a killing site in Russia. She and her mother later escaped such deportation only because they were presumed to be among the tens of thousands of civilians killed when Allied bombing created the world’s greatest manmade firestorm. For the remainder of the war, they lived in hiding on the outskirts of the city. During that period, her father was imprisoned for helping Belgian Jews to evade internment.”

Ms. Ingram’s essay, “Operation Gomorrah,” about surviving the Allied bombing of Hamburg, was selected by David Foster Wallace for the 2007 Best American Essays.

In 1952, Ms. Ingram arrived in the U.S. and joined the movement for racial equality, first in New York and later in Washington D.C., where as a member of

Please see **VOICES**, page 15

AUGUST



The scene of a recent fatal crash on North Main Street.

PHOTO BY AIMEE M. HENDERSON

Victim in fatal crash identified

BELCHERTOWN – In August, investigators identified the victim in a recent single motor vehicle crash as 19-year-old Miles Murray of Henniker, New Hampshire.

The crash occurred shortly before 9 p.m. earlier this month when Murray was travelling southbound on Route 202 in Belchertown, lost control of his vehicle, and crashed into a house

at 73 North Main Street.

Murray, the sole occupant of the vehicle, was pronounced deceased at the scene, according to reports.

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Man sentenced to probation after guilty plea in 2021 fatal crash

BELCHERTOWN – The driver who struck and killed a motorcyclist on Route 9 in 2021 has pleaded guilty to a single charge of negligent operation of a motor vehicle in August 2023.

The crash, which took place on May 15, 2021, on Route 9 in Belchertown near the Ware town line, claimed the life of

Wales resident Niles N. Robbins, who was operating a 2018 Harley Davidson motorcycle. A passenger on his motorcycle sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Mary Lane Hospital for treatment, according to the office of Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan.

HAMILTON from page 6

He engineered President Richard Nixon’s historic visit to China in 1972, opening the door to improved U.S.-Chinese relations and ultimately reshaping the geopolitical map. He promoted détente with the Soviet Union, helping to reduce Cold War tensions.

In the Middle East, his tireless shuttle diplomacy improved relations between Israel and its neighbors. These were real accomplishments.

Kissinger shared the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the agreement that ended the Vietnam War. His critics found that highly ironic.

During the war, Kissinger orchestrated the U.S. bombing and invasion of Cambodia, which expanded the conflict and fueled a civil war that eventually brought the Khmer Rouge to power, resulting in up to three million deaths. The Cambodia disaster was Exhibit No. 1 for critics who accused Kissinger of war crimes, but he was also tied to a brutal military coup in Chile, Indonesia’s bloody invasion of East Timor, a violent civil war in East Pakistan and other foreign policy disasters.

Kissinger later had a lucrative career

in consulting. He clearly enjoyed being a celebrity, rubbing elbows with rich and powerful people and being photographed with glamorous women.

He became a great figure on the social circuit in Washington. Getting Kissinger to attend your dinner was a big achievement.

Henry Kissinger left quite a stamp on American foreign policy. He was a master of developing strategy and exercising power.

But American greatness isn’t just about using force and gaining advantage. It also relies on our faith in democratic governance and our belief in human rights and the dignity of all people.

There’s a place for sober realism, but American foreign policy should be grounded in our values.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbered squares for clues.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. A way to injure
5. Mutual savings bank
8. Rock TV channel
11. Large number of fish swimming together
13. Military mailbox
14. Female of a horse
15. Category
16. City
17. Breezed through
18. Officer who bears a mace
20. Tax collector
21. “Cheers” actress Perlman
22. Pauses before acting
25. Extracted information from a wave
30. Tendency to revert to something ancestral
31. No seats available
32. Nocturnal rodents
33. Moves gently to

- and fro
38. Not good
41. A way to ready
43. One who makes something better
45. Things associated with American history
48. Ancient Phoenician fertility god
49. A continuous portion of a circle
50. Volcanic craters
55. Units of electrical resistance
56. Gamble on
57. Ethiopian town
59. One point east of northeast
60. Polynesian garland of flowers
61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
62. State of fuss
63. Keyboard key
64. Partner to relaxation

CLUES DOWN

- 1. “The world’s most famous arena”
2. Polite interruption sound
3. Private school in New York
4. Refuse of grapes
5. __ Tomei, actress
6. Adult beverages
7. Supporter
8. Papier-__, art material
9. Forests have them
10. Most ancient Hindu scriptures
12. Downwind
14. Marketplace
19. Flowering plant genus
23. Street where nightmares happen
24. Admirer
25. Dip lightly into water
26. When you hope to get there
27. Partner to cheese
28. Egg
29. A way to disqualify
34. South American plant
35. Fold-away bed
36. Debbie Harry album “__ Koo”
37. Swedish krona
39. Displaying warmth and friendliness
40. Official orders
41. Bowling alley necessity
42. Stray
44. About milk
45. Expressed pleasure
46. Caribbean dance
47. If not
48. __ fide (Latin)
51. Swiss river
52. Hebrew calendar month
53. One easily swindled
54. Point that is one point south of southwest
58. Small island (British)

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Sandhill cranes

Rick Hendra of Oakham took this photo of sandhill cranes foraging in a field on Stone's Road in Oakham.

In his email, he wrote, "I took this picture this morning (Sunday, Dec. 17) about halfway up Stone Road. Their call was so loud it startled me from 50 yards away. And they were large, but oddly colored."

The sandhill crane is a tall bird about 45 inches, gray colored with a dark red patch on the forehead and a black bill. They have staining of feathers on their back and tail caused by the iron rich soil on its beak when it preens feathers. The immature crane lacks the red patch and has an orange bill. It also may have more rust colored feathers on the back and tail.

The sandhill crane summers on prairies and tundra and during winter feed on agricultural fields and roost in shallow water. For several years now, Hardwick had a pair of nesting sandhill cranes, who successfully raised chicks.

The female lays one to three olive eggs with dark marks in a mound like nest of marsh plants, grasses and weeds either placed on the ground or shallow water. Courtship displays are seen during migration and involve graceful jumps off the ground in a dancing manner.

Many years ago, Richard Jankauskas, saw some in a field on South Street in

Barre. He commented about a pair jumping up and down and dancing.

Their voice is a low pitched "karoo, karoo, karoo." Rick Hendra mentioned their call in his email printed above.

Bird count

A Brimfield resident, who visits ponds in Warren, Brimfield, Holland and Sturbridge with his wife listed birds seen on Dec. 8. They included 210 Canada geese, 93 mallards, 70 hooded mergansers, three black ducks, two pied-billed grebes, one great blue heron, one bald eagle, two crows, one white-breasted nuthatch, two black-capped chickadees, three bluebirds, four house finches, one goldfinch, six white-throated sparrows, six dark-eyed juncos and three cardinals.

He also emailed in late November, "I checked the ponds in Warren and there were 14 hooded

mergansers very actively feeding and a very cold looking great blue heron that looked like it was not enjoying the 36 degree temperature.

Christmas bird count

For over 120 years the Audubon Society has been doing a Christmas bird count and this year is no different. People can participate in an organized count or just do one on their own in their backyard.

Decline in bird numbers

I received an email on Wednesday, Nov. 29 from a long time birder. He said, "[I] regularly feed them but have noticed a steep drop off of the number and type of birds since around September. Right now we have a loyal troop of blue jays and that's about it. Usually we have copious amounts of starlings, chickadees, grackles, crows, titmice, cardinals, juncos, etc."

He said he asked many people about this phenomena and "they have noticed the same thing but can't explain it either. We are all aware of some birds heading South but the sheer volume has dropped dramatically."

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.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

AIC students are inducted into Psi Chi, the International Honor Society of Psychology, during a ceremony on campus on Nov. 30.

Local students among those inducted into AIC Psychology Honor Society

REGION – Three local residents were among the eighteen AIC students recently inducted into Psi Chi, the International Honor Society of Psychology.

The induction ceremony was held in the AIC Campus Center on Nov. 30; Rebekah Higgins Molina is a Belchertown resident, and Lauren Hartling and Nora Young are both Granby residents.

"The college recently reinstated its chapter of one of the largest honor societies in the country. Psi Chi was found-

ed and 1929 with a mission to recognize and promote excellence in the science and application of psychology. To be inducted into Psi Chi is an esteemed honor," a press statement reads. "Students must be in the top 35 percent of their class, have a major or minor in psychology, and have excelled in their psychology courses."

"Congratulations to these students, their professors, and chapter advisers," the press statement reads.

Nugget's second chance

EAST BROOKFIELD— Nugget, formerly known as Natty, faced unimaginable pain and adversity when he arrived at Second Chance Animal Services with a severe leg injury. The dedicated team at Second Chance worked tirelessly to save his leg, but ultimately, the decision to amputate was made to ensure Nugget's comfort and quality of life.

In a heartwarming twist of fate, Nugget

Please see **NUGGET**, page 16



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Nugget, once known as Natty, came to Second Chance with a severe leg injury and is now the Timberyard Brewery dog.

VOICES from page 16

the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) she fought discrimination in housing, employment, education, policing, and other aspects of life there. She was a volunteer worker for the 1963 March on Washington and organized overnight protests to support the Mississippi Freedom Party delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, according to reports. Afterwards, at the request of civil rights heroine Fannie Lou Hamer, she went to Mississippi as a staff worker for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to register Black voters and direct a Freedom School.

"More recently, Democracy Now! interviewed Ms. Ingram about her participation in demonstrations in front of the White House calling for a ceasefire in Gaza," the press statement reads.

In that interview on Nov. 8, she said, "Netanyahu's government, Israel's policies for decades has been the suppression of Palestinians, land grabs, deprivation of Palestinians. It is painful for me, as someone who has experienced all of the terrors that Gazans are experiencing, and even the horrific attacks in Israel by Hamas. But Hamas's attack on Israel does not jus-

tify the slaughter of women and children, especially children. I was a child of war. I have experienced all of these things. I have also known for a fact that what Israel is doing will not end this conflict. It will only exacerbate it."

To register for "A Community Conversation Toward Peace in the Middle East," email belchertownvoices4justice@gmail.com to request link. After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The event is free and open to the public.

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SEPTEMBER

Fair goers celebrate 'Blue Jeans & Fair Dreams'

BELCHERTOWN - Despite the on and off rain all weekend, fair goers headed to the Belchertown town common in September to celebrate the 164th annual Belchertown Fair. The weekend kicked off with the ever-popular wristband night on Friday evening, with the midway packed shoulder to shoulder with eager riders. The parade stepped off Saturday morning and showcased many local organizations and businesses from Belchertown. Saturday and Sunday were filled with musical performances, activities, delicious foods, and much more.



PHOTO BY AIMEE M. HENDERSON

The Ferris wheel lights up the night sky during wristband night.

Police dept. welcomes 'comfort dog' to its ranks

BELCHERTOWN - The police department in September announced its newest member—Comfort Dog Oliver.

Oliver is a Labrador retriever puppy who began training and working with his handler, Officer Valerie Austin, according to a statement on social media penned by the department.

"We would like to thank everyone who helped us get the Comfort Dog Program up and running," police said, adding that Boonefield Labradors offered "support and donation" of Oliver.



PHOTOS BY AIMEE M. HENDERSON

A luminary bag is placed among the purple flags that represent the lives lost to overdose in 2022.

Candlelight vigil recognized lives lost to overdose

BELCHERTOWN - Last year, 2,357 Massachusetts residents lost their lives to overdose.

To recognize those lives, as well as bring awareness to and reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together (BOAT) held a candlelight vigil on the town common on Aug. 31.

A visual display of 2,357 purple flags filled the center of the common—each one representing a life lost. In Belchertown alone, from 2020 to present day, there have been 12 lives lost to overdose.

NOV.



PHOTO BY AIMEE M. HENDERSON

Marine Corps Sgt. Kevin McMenamin stands with his wife, Cosette, after being pinned with a Purple Heart.

OCTOBER

Fire dept. open house held in October

The town's fire department described its Open House event as a "great turnout with lessons learned for fire prevention week."

"A big thank you to Belchertown Police, Animal Control, MEMA, and Wing Hospital for joining us," the fire department released in a statement after the event. "We have great partnerships."



(PHOTO CREDIT: BELCHERTOWN POLICE K9 UNIT)

The Belchertown K9 unit at the Fire Department's recent Open House.

Pickleball tourney raises funds for police comfort dog

BELCHERTOWN - Oliver, the police department's comfort dog, had been on the job for one month in October, and in that short time has become one of the most well-known and well-loved community members.

The new comfort dog program does not come without costs, however, and as a self-funded program, it relies on donations and fundraisers to stay successful. In October 2023, the pickleball community came together to support the comfort dog program with a tournament that raised nearly \$2,000.

Belchertown Police Chief Kevin Pacunas said he knows how popular pickleball has become in town, so when Wilbur Quirk approached him with the idea of a tournament to raise funds for Oliver, he thought it would be a "win-win".

Veterans Day 2023

BELCHERTOWN - It has taken more than 50 years, but on this year's Veterans Day, Marine Corps Sgt. Kevin McMenamin was formally pinned with a Purple Heart for the wounds he received in action against the enemy on Nov. 4, 1969 while serving in Vietnam.

Belchertown honored McMenamin, and all of its veterans, during a ceremony held at the Belchertown High School, where many gathered to thank the brave men and women who have chosen service over self.

The ceremony started with the ringing of the bell at 11 a.m. and was followed by the posting of Colors by Cub Scout Pack 507. An invocation prayer was given by Army veteran, Alex Loss, of the Belchertown United Church of Christ. He bestowed a blessing on all those gathered to honor those that have been called to serve and protect the United States.

Select Board Vice Chair Ronald Aponte then addressed the crowd, reminding all those gathered that they are only able to have such a ceremony because of the veterans. He read the poem "It is the Veteran" which reinforced that message.

NUGGET from page 15

caught the attention of Matt and Nellie Zarif, the generous owners of Timberyard Brewing Company and longtime supporters of Second Chance. The brewery, known for its commitment to the community, had not only donated to Second Chance but also hosted events and provided storage for a large donation.

Nugget's story resonated with the Timberyard team, who had just started hosting popular puppy yoga classes to benefit Second Chance, led by the talented yoga

instructor Audrey Martinez. The classes, held monthly, include a visit from friendly adoptable dogs available at Second Chance, who romp around the taproom while attendees work on their yoga moves.

Nugget, now thriving after his surgery, found his forever home with the Zarifs, joining a loving pack that includes three young boys and another three-legged dog, Lucy. Nugget's dog-sister wears a prosthetic leg and goes to work with her dog mom, Nellie Zarif, a prosthetist at Hanger Clinic in Worcester, where she

helps to inspire people with limb loss.

Nellie considered making a prosthesis for Nugget but quickly realized that he did not need one due to the nature of his amputation and his young age. "He is so fast on three legs that four legged dogs have a hard time keeping up with him," said Lindsay Doray, chief development officer at Second Chance, who expressed admiration for Nugget's resilience. "We were in awe of his determination."

As a proud member of the Timberyard family, Nugget comes

to work with Matt Zarif every day and has become a local sensation. The staff from Second Chance, including the veterinarian that performed his surgery, stop by the brewery from time to time to visit him. "Nugget is the smartest dog that I have ever met," said Matt Zarif. "Like-Lassie level smart; when you talk to this dog, he understands you. He's the perfect brewery dog, so well behaved, sweet, and friendly. He loves being a part of the action."

Nugget has embraced his role as a dogfluencer, delighting visitors at Timberyard and steal-

ing the spotlight in social media posts. His favorite gig? Greeting attendees on puppy yoga mornings. He's even been spotted auditioning with Santa for a chance to be a reindeer, sitting patiently next to Santa for hours during his visits to the brewery, posing for photos with happy families, and helping to fundraise for a local charity. Nugget's journey from pain to fame is a testament to the power of love, resilience, and a community that cares.

Town announces updated board, committee vacancies

BELCHERTOWN – The town’s Select Board is seeking citizens to share their expertise by serving on a town board or committee.

Those who have time and are interested in getting involved in the town’s activities are asked to submit a letter of interest to: Select Board, The Finnerty House, One South Main Street, P.O. Box 670, Belchertown, MA 01007, or by email to selectboard@belchertown.org.

The town has announced that it wishes to fill the following vacancies:

Conservation Commission

Two associate member vacancies

The Commission is charged with the protection of the community’s natural resources and advises other municipal boards and committees on conservation issues relating to their areas of responsibility. Interested applicants will need to familiarize themselves with the Wetland Regulations and attend workshops and meetings regularly.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Trail Stewardship Council

One vacancy

The town wishes to fill a vacancy to represent landowners of the town on the Trail Stewardship Council. Interested individuals should be knowledgeable about local land

use and related issues. Additional information specific to this council can be found at newenglandtrail.org.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Animal Control Advisory Board

Two vacancies

This board has the authority to conduct hearings as allowed in the town’s by-laws and pose reasonable conditions as deemed appropriate. The ideal applicants may be a dog breeder, a dog trainer, a veterinarian, a non-pet owner from the community, a medical professional specializing in emergency medicine, an animal enthusiast or caregiver, a pet owner, and/or interested residents.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Communications Committee

Two full-member seats

The purpose of this committee is to develop a communication plan for the town of Belchertown, to improve information flow from the town to the public. Experience with marketing, communications, and/or social media is highly preferred.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Belchertown State School Buildings and Grounds Committee

One full-member real-estate seat

The committee will advise the town and

the Select Board on funding opportunities for maintaining and developing the remaining State School buildings, as well as advising on historical and cultural development opportunities. Expertise with real estate/architecture, grant writing, or historical experience to strengthen the skill set of the committee is highly preferred.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Belchertown Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

Two community member vacancies

The focus of the Task Force is to develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement for the Select Board to review and to consider adopting, to seek out opportunities to acknowledge and/or celebrate the diversity within the community, and to welcome the whole community to join in, offering suggestions on how the town addresses specific or potential acts of violence, including hate speech, should such acts arise in the community, region, or state.

“Efforts should be made to include voices from the community or communities that are directly affected,” the town released.

Partnership opportunities with surrounding towns to strengthen regional or state efforts might also be explored. This is a seven-member committee to include a rep-

resentative from law enforcement, a representative from Town Hall, and five community members representing diversity in one or more of the following areas: racial and ethnic backgrounds, social positions with respect to gender identity and sexual orientation, social positions with respect to disability, and age groups and prior vocational experiences.

All are encouraged to apply.
Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Zoning Board of Appeals

One Associate Member seat

The ZBA is responsible for hearing and deciding on applications for special permits, variances and appeals from decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer/ Building Inspector.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Historic District By-Law Commission

One full-member real-estate seat

The Commission has regulatory control over new construction, reconstruction, alterations, movements, and demolition of all exterior architectural features of buildings and structures within the Historic District, which are visible from any public street, public way, or public park.

Deadline: Friday, Jan. 5

Public Notices ◀

Notice of Public Hearing Relative to Site Plan Review Pursuant to MGL c.40A, §11

The Planning Board of the Town of Belchertown will hold a public hearing to discuss a Site Plan Application for a new commercial business submitted by David Pare of Arcpoint Brewing Company, LLC, 30 Front Street, Map 243, Lot 178.05. The public hearing will be held as follows:

Place:

Select Board Meeting Room
Lawrence Memorial Hall
2 Jabish Street, Belchertown
Date: January 9, 2024
Time: 7:45 pm

The subject matter of the plan is as indicated below.

30 Front Street – Arcpoint Brewing Company – Business Neighborhood Center Zone. To open a brewery with incidental tasting room and retail sales.

The plan and application are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Town Clerk’s office and the Planning Board office and at masspublicnotices.org

Remote access information:

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/173538941>

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United States: +1 (408) 650-3123

Access Code: 173-538-941

Daniel Beaudette
Chair, Planning Board
12/21, 12/28/2023

Public Hearing Legal Notice Belchertown

Zoning Board of Appeals

In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 11 the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on **Wednesday January 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM.**

This hearing will be held in the Select Board’s meeting room of Lawrence Memorial Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA on the application from Dakota Richards seeking a special permit §145-69; to revert the building at 32 Park Street back to a four-unit apartment; §145-17 C 2. Map 243 Parcel 65 Zoned B1A copy of the application may be inspected at the Town Clerk’s office (Room 201) 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, Lawrence Memorial Hall, 2 Jabish Street, Belchertown, MA. or at website https://www.belchertown.org/committees/zoning_board_of_appeals/index.php

Any Person interested and wishing to be heard should appear at the time and place designated.

Jennifer Sharrow,
Chair Person,
Zoning Board of Appeals
12/28/2023, 01/04/2024



Public Hearing Special Permit Legal Notice Belchertown Planning Board

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Sections 9 and 11, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing to discuss a special permit application for an accessory apartment by Robert Wojtczak for 67 Pondview Circle, Map 232, Lot 174.09, Belchertown, MA.

A public hearing will be held as follows:

Place: Belchertown Town Hall, 2 Jabish St., Belchertown, MA

Date: January 9, 2023

Time: 7:30 PM

Remote access information:

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

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Daniel Beaudette,
Chair Planning Board
12/21, 12/28/2023

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Daniel Beaudette,
Chair, Planning Board
12/21, 12/28/2023

com/173538941
You can also dial in using your phone.
United States: +1 (408) 650-3123
Access Code: 173-538-941

The application is available for inspection during regular business hours at the Town Clerk and Planning Board office, 2 Jabish Street.

Daniel Beaudette, Chair
Planning Board
12/21, 12/28/2023

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In observance of **NEW YEAR’S PUBLIC NOTICES** WILL HAVE AN **EARLY AD DEADLINE**
Place your public notice no later than
Thurs., Dec. 28 Noon
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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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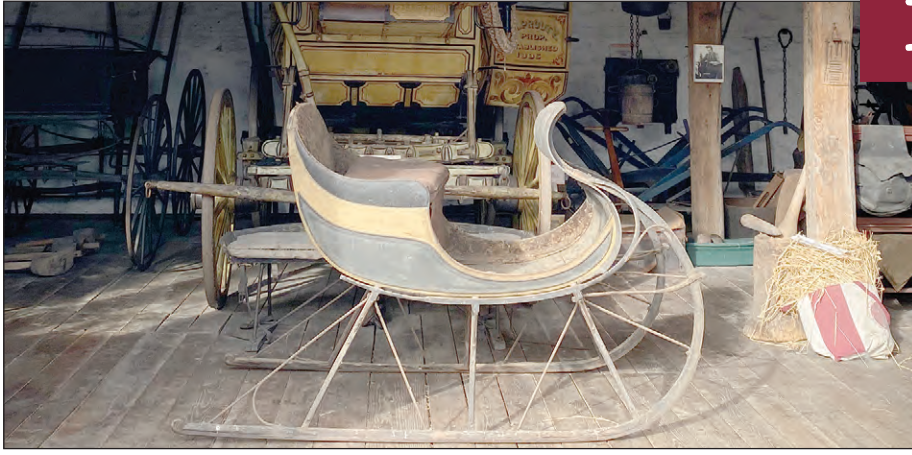
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DECEMBER

‘One horse open sleigh’ returns home to Belchertown

The Trustees of the Belchertown Historical Association have announced the acquisition of a 19th century “one horse open sleigh” that was built in Belchertown by the firm of Hawks and Smith.

“The beautiful sleigh, in very good original condition and paint, has returned ‘home’ just in time for the holidays, and has been moved to the Ford Annex carriage barn at Belchertown’s Stone House Museum,” a press statement reads.

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 On: January 16, 2024, at 4:30 pm

Presented By:

Kirsten L. Krieger RN, BSN
 Public Health Nurse
 (413) 967-9615

Email: kkrieger@townofware.com

Website: www.quabbinhealthdistrict.com

Please RSVP by 1/12/2024 to:
kkrieger@townofware.com

Training provided courtesy of the following organizations:

