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Looking back at 2025



Submitted photos

Pop R&B vocalists Gabriella, Samara, Alex, Arianna, Legacy, Nasiya.

Thanking you for a wonderful year

By Emily-Rose Pappas

Looking back at 2025, it was a year of fun and a year of new friends. I grew as a writer and met so many new people and made even more new friends.

It was a great year filled with challenges, laughs, hot summer events, and cold events, I wanted to be inside for.

Even through the difficult times, like when I fell and tore my ACL and was laid up through February, I found my-

self grateful for the many connections and friends I made that helped me get the papers done from home by sending me photos and emails.

The people in the towns of Belchertown, Granby, and South Hadley are wonderful, and I felt truly blessed to be able to represent and share the stories of these towns this year, and I look forward to the future and what other stories I will be able to tell.

Thank you all for a wonderful year.



The Concert Band directed by Jeremy Milligan, providing the crowd with a stunning performance of The Avengers Main Theme.

January

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts hosts concert to celebrate musical talent

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – Music connects us, and at the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School, there are multiple opportunities to learn and hone in on the skills of music and beyond.

Music Department Leader David Cavallin has been teaching at PVPA for six years, and this is his first year

leading the music department. PVPA is filled with dedicated staff, teachers, and parents who work together to support the musical talents of their students and children.

The PVPA hosted their Winter Music Showcase for a special two-day concert event on Friday, January 10, and Saturday, January 11, with unique and fun musical experiences directed by David Cavallin, Jeremy Milligan, and Rahul Roy.

The showcase featured the work the students completed through the fall semester. The performance classes help students prepare for these showcases at the start of each semester.

Both shows featured different groups and performances, with Friday featuring 78 String Ensemble, 78 Concert Band, Orchestra, Adagio Ensemble, and 78 Rock and Soul Revue. Saturday's featured Noteworthy: A Cappel-

la, Pop, R&B, and Gig Band.

"We place great value in exposing our students to many music genres during their time with us," said Cavallin. "The music featured on this particular show includes instrumental and orchestral pieces and arrangements, rock, R&B, pop, soul, and jazz-infused arrangements, contemporary a cappella, and covers from the 70s, 80s, and beyond."

Students from 7th through

12th grade perform during the showcase, sharing their talents and passions for music and the instruments they play, creating new and exciting ways to have fun playing.

"Love, respect, empathy, compassion, and collaboration are at the heart of what we do here," said Cavallin. "PVPA's Music Department stands on the idea that music is a universal language that should be accessible to everyone."

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School is a free public charter school enrolling students in grades 7 through 12 and offers a college preparatory curriculum with a focus on broad exposure to the performing arts. You can find more information as well as application deadlines at www.pvpa.org/admissions.

February



Turley Photos by Emily-Rose Pappas

Jenny showing the kids how to create their own break coded message, and how to break the codes, with a Caesar Cypher.



Three friends working together to figure out how to decode a word with the cyphers, a group favorite already.

South Hadley Public Library hosts new program for kids to explore STEAM

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Public Library's children's department is full of wonderful events that help to encourage this growth and sense of wonder, all thanks to the mind of Children's Coordinator Jenny Arch.

Fir the first time, the library began hosting a special STEAM Time program every Tuesday from 3:45 to 4:45 for kids to explore STEAM through different activities and games.

STEAM is an acronym for Science, Technology, En-

gineering, Art, and Math, and encourages children to explore these topics in new and exciting ways.

"STEAM has become a familiar acronym across the education and library world, and it's such a big umbrella that there's a lot of room to try out different things," said Arch.

For the first afternoon, kids played games and puzzles including a Caesar Cypher decoding activity, a board game called Robot Turtles, and a Spot It game.

The program is open to children in kindergarten through fifth grade, a large range, but the program will feature all sorts of activities,

projects, and puzzles that can be done independently or in a small group.

"STEAM time is a chance to try lots of new things. Robot Turtles and (de)coding with Caesar ciphers went well, and I'm looking forward to some building challenges with blocks and other materials, creating penny boats, learning Snap Circuits, painting with primary colors, and more," said Arch.

If your kids want to have a chance to explore, get ready for fun adventures to be had at the library every Tuesday afternoon after school, where friends can be made, and new things can be learned.

March

Local photographer highlights Persephone Exhibit at the library

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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GRANBY – Local photographer Stephanie Granger had an exhibit at the Granby Free Public Library, featuring the story of the Greek goddess Persephone.

"I've always loved photography, and growing up, I would spend hours looking through boxes of old family photos. Those tangible memories felt so much more real to me than digital images on a screen," said Granger. "I wanted to capture his life the way my childhood had been documented."

She dove into researching the art form, different cameras, and read equipment reviews, and read through countless blog posts about composition and settings, but became overwhelmed by it all until she found a class for moms like her.

"That's when I realized photography wasn't just about mastering the camera-it was about developing my eye for the shot," said Granger.

She found an online photography community and took the different courses they offered and recommended.

All of this research and time resulted in the Perse-

phone Exhibit at the library, which features a collection of about a dozen self-portraits, but she has hundreds.

She used a tripod and interval timer, and learned how to model, spending time with different poses, framing, and focus with the camera, and playing with lighting.

"The idea for Persephone came when I realized all these images I had poured my heart into were just sitting on a hard drive, unseen," said Granger. "When deciding on the theme of this exhibit, I looked at the timing and, with it being March, was drawn to the transition from winter to spring."

Her fascination with Greek mythology, paired with the themes of transformation and renewal, is the perfect time and subject matter as we approach spring, and the snow begins to melt.

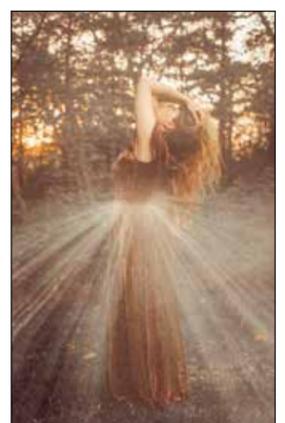
"Art has a way of making people feel things they might not even be able to put into words," said Granger. "My biggest hope for this exhibit is simply to share my work. If my photos make someone feel something-anything-that's the greatest compliment I could receive."

For more information about her work, you can email Stephanie at: stephaniegrangerphotography@gmail.com



Submitted photos

Stephanie Granger is hanging up the photos a part of the exhibit.



"Release"

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 2

March



Turley Photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

The Senior Center was packed as the residents all came to ask questions of the West Street Building Committee.

Q & A session offers information on \$15.7 million Granby project

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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GRANBY – The West Street School Building was vacated and closed in 2017 and has been vacant since then. and served as the elementary school until it received funding from the MSBA for the other elementary school in town.

“Back in 2018, it was looked at by another committee, and the suggestion at that point was for the Selectboard to raze the building, and to build two smaller new buildings in phases for town offices and the COA, but no further action was taken after the recommendation,” said WSB Committee Chair Lynn Mercier.

The project of the West Street School Building was taken on by the newly formed committee five years later, and they spent time looking for the best and most cost-effective ways to create the space needed for the town.

The total cost was estimated to be about \$15.7 million for the 22,000 square foot building, and upon comple-

tion, it and include the Council on Aging, all municipal offices, space for town meetings and elections, a community kitchen, and more.

Additions to heating and cooling systems and ventilation upgrades are needed within the building, as well as electrical services, plumbing, and HVAC changes, for an estimated amount of \$3 million to meet MA codes.

These unforeseen costs led to massive increases from the original proposed \$5 million to \$15.7 million estimated costs that are being seen now.

During the Q&A, Mercier also took some time to answer some questions she had received recently in order to maintain open communication.

The first question was about demolishing the WSB, but in order to do this, the town still has to pay off a \$160,000 bond on the roof, and abatement and demolition of the building would cost over \$2.9 million.

“As for keeping offices in the annex, we currently spend over \$54,000 to use it in rent and maintenance costs,” said Mercier. “Our lease expires in

June of this year.”

Between rent and maintenance for both of the properties where the town offices are, the town has to spend over \$100,000 annually to maintain the use of both buildings.

“If we can sell the COA building, any money will help to pay down the bond, and will also generate property tax revenue for us,” Mercier said.

Because the bond rate is not known yet, it is estimated that if the town bonds \$10 million at a 5% rate for 25 years, and your home is valued at \$350,000, your tax will increase by \$236.44 over those 25 years unless the bond is paid off earlier.

“The tax increases are all guesstimates right now, because the bond is unknown, and may go down to \$7 or \$8 million depending on what the town can approve for funding,” said Mercier.

Attendees got the chance to ask questions of the board directly, expressing concerns and pushbacks on the project, as well as encouragement for the project. You can find a GCAM recording of the session on their YouTube channel.

April

can really bring you peace and clear your head,” said Tara Murphy, one of the dancers. “The presence of the other people and vibrations of the drums can help that, as well. I feel so honored and blessed with being able to share this.”

Murphy has been drumming and dancing for a long time, starting in college, and dancing and drumming for 35 years now. She took a trip to Ghana where she first learned and came back to find African artists in Boston to learn more from that focused on West Africa.

“When I started doing the dancing and drumming, I found I had a natural ability for those art forms, and the more I did it, the more I realized they were very healing art forms, and that African drumming can be brought into many settings to be very therapeutic for groups,” said Murphy.

The work of diversifying our education systems can help kids learn about their heritage, which is something Murphy shared she wished she could have learned sooner. In an age of AI and people

becoming addicted to devices, its important to find identity and belonging in culture and in your neighbors, rather than technology, which affects anxiety and depression.

“I think every culture has something good to offer, and we can all learn from each other,” said Murphy.

You can find more information about upcoming drumming circles and Ammaya Dance and Drum on their website, www.ammaya.org.

Town celebrates groundbreaking of Buttery Brook Park

By Emily-Rose Pappas
Staff Writer
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SOUTH HADLEY – For the past few years, the Friends of Buttery Brook Park and many other members have worked tirelessly to create funding for this park to make it even better, creating more accessibility and more.

Kim Prough and the Friends, Town Administrator Lisa Wong, Director of Human Services Andy Rogers, Senator Jake Oliveira, State Representative Homar Gomez, members of the Chamber, Select Board, and many, many more people worked together to make this possible.

“This is such a great project,” said Wong. “This project would not have happened without the assistance from

the state, which is providing a \$500,000 Grant towards the project.”

“We couldn’t do what we do without these amazing volunteers and their support,” said Prough. “We have all of these people committed, and I truly believe we’ve been able to get so much done because of these people’s support.”

The last major investment in the park in 2013 included the bathroom, playground, and spray park, as well as creating green space. Melissa Cryan and Andy Rogers helped the park take advantage of the PARC Grant, SHELD donated \$20,000 and installed WiFi, and the Friends fundraised an additional \$200,000 for the project.

“This is really going to be the lifeblood and heart of our community,” said Senator

Jake Oliveira. “As someone who represents this community, I want to thank the community for allowing us to represent you.”

“Something that is really important for communities is mental health, and parks like this are so amazing for that reason,” said Representative Homar Gomez.

New features introduced included new walking trails, enhancements to the playground like poured-in-place rubber, a new bandshell, repaving the basketball court, and more.

Dozens of people attended the groundbreaking, and the community is looking forward to the many new features coming to the park in the future to make it a better place for all.



Turley Photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

Standing proudly with shovels to celebrate the construction beginning on the park.

April

Kids participate in drum circle

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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SOUTH HADLEY – Learning about other cultures is a wonderful opportunity to grow and explore the world around you, as well as the other people we come in contact with.

The South Hadley Public Library, sponsored by the South Hadley Cultural Council, hosted drummers and dancers from Ammaya Dance and Drum.

Children and their friends and family got to participate in a drumming circle and dance and make some new friends while making music together.

The drums, called djembe drums, originated from Mali, West Africa, and sang songs,



Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

Little Gabe and his mom and dad, having some fun playing the drums together.

one in the Twi language of Ghana, and the other in Yoruba, from Nigeria.

“What I want to emphasize about the drumming circles is its healing nature, and how it

May

Story Stroll returns to Gaylord Memorial Library

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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SOUTH HADLEY – Sitting down with a good book is a wonderful way to unwind after a long day, and reading

has always served many benefits, especially for children as they develop their language skills.

For some kids, sitting down in a circle or on a lap to hear a story is fun and entertaining, but not all kids are made the same and may prefer to go on walk or move while hearing a story.

And that is where a Story Stroll comes in.

The StoryWalk was created as a way to encourage reading for children, but also to provide ways for them to spend time outside at the same time.

Children’s Librarian Janet Shea at the Gaylord Memorial Library in South Hadley was inspired by the Story-

Walk from Vermont and began her Story Stroll in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has been going on for 6 years.

“I love it when I drive by, and I see someone reading the story to their child. I have already seen this happening this year, and it makes me very happy,” said Shea.

Shea goes through several different questions when choosing her stories for the stroll, including the size of the pages to fit into laminating sheets, if the pictures are bright and captivating, large text size, 18-24 pages range, if the story is interesting or seasonal, and if it’s appropriate for all ages.

Please see YIR, page 3

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May

“My favorite thing about the Story Stroll was that it helped me connect to our young patrons and families during COVID. I like that the library doesn’t have to be open for patrons to stroll through a story and enjoy reading together,” said Shea. “I hope they enjoy all the stories that I choose for the Stroll and that they make precious memories of time well spent together, reading and strolling through the library grounds.”

If you would like to request a book for the Story Stroll, you can send your request to Janet Shea at jshea@cwmar.org.

Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

The stroll goes all the way around the building, and there is much to learn.



Showcase South Hadley celebrated with music and fun

By Emily-Rose Pappas
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SOUTH HADLEY – After months of planning, the long-anticipated celebration Showcase South Hadley finally arrived, bringing with it opportunities for fun and relaxation.

Despite the rainy conditions, hundreds of people came out to enjoy the vendors and music, and creative performances, including a performance by American Idol winner Ruthie Foster.

“The most meaningful part was the abounding creative spirit,” said John Anz, who helped coordinate the weekend. “Despite the weather, and as a result, some reduced crowds on Saturday, the artists were without ex-



Submitted Photos

Kaia and Madison, with their faces painted, are planting their seeds to take home.

ception thrilled to be a part of this event and just as dedicated to their presentations and performances, whether to 25 people or over 100.”

Showcase South Hadley was made possible by the generous sponsorship of about 20 corporate and community members, and dozens of volunteers throughout the weekend.

The weekend was filled with performances, face painting, food trucks, and crafters.

While Saturday featured the South Hadley Center at the churches, Common, and Mount Holyoke, Sunday spread out in the Falls at the Library, churches, and Firehouse Museum.

On Saturday night, about 700 people filled Abbey Chapel for performances by Ruthie Foster and Aisha Burns.

“I think South Hadley has a little bit of everything to offer our residents, families, businesses, neighbors, friends, and visitors. That’s what makes us special, and that’s what we’ve been trying to highlight through SHOWCASE! We’ve got it all here, and we want to share it with the world, or at least the Pioneer Valley,” said Anz.

South Hadley has many restaurants, coffee shops, talented artists and musicians, venues for live performances and entertainment, a thriving business community, and

other wonderful things that the team that made Showcase wanted to highlight for this weekend.

“Appreciating what we’ve got here in South Hadley, what we can do together, and making a more concerted effort in the future to foster and promote the arts and culture here,” said Anz. “But this isn’t just about ‘getting’. This is a ‘pay-it-forward’ moment and opportunity... so others come to know what we know, tell their friends in turn as well, and so on.”

So, so many people made this weekend possible, and with their help, hard work, and energy to get it and keep it going, everyone had a wonderful time.

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 5

Application opens January 1st for Local Farmer Awards: Supporting Capital Improvements

REGION – Farmers in Western Massachusetts are invited to apply for the 12th year of the Local Farmer Awards, which provide grants of up to \$2,500 to support critical capital improvement projects on local farms.

The awards help farmers invest in equipment and infrastructure related to planting, growing, harvesting, and processing—tools that strengthen farm operations, improve efficiency, and enhance competitiveness in the marketplace.

The Local Farmer Awards is a program of the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation (HGCF), in partnership with Big Y, the

Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, and other generous funders. Now in its 12th year, the program has supported more than 320 farmers and funded 788 projects across the region.

Past awards have enabled farmers to make meaningful upgrades, such as installing irrigation systems, purchasing no-till and cultivation equipment, improving fencing and livestock infrastructure, upgrading wash and pack station, and expanding milk storage and bottling capacity.

“Supporting local farmers is an investment in our com-

munity,” said Matt Bannister, SVP, Corporate Responsibility and Sponsorships, at PeoplesBank,” he continued. “We are proud to support this program, and I am continually inspired by the creativity, resilience, and impact of the projects farmers undertake with these awards.”

To be eligible, farms must be located in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, or Berkshire County and have gross annual farm sales of at least \$10,000. A full list of eligibility requirements and application details is available at www.farmerawards.org.

The application deadline is January 31, 2026.

Christmas tree disposal PSA

SOUTH HADLEY – The Town of South Hadley **DOES NOT** collect Christmas trees at the curb. Residents must bring the Christmas Trees to the recycle center, any time

during the month of **January**, with **NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED**. Other options include holding on to the trees until spring yard waste collection in April. Thank you.



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Opinion

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor

I'm on SS disability; should I switch to regular Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

Should I take my Social Security now at age 62, or wait till I am 65?

I've been collecting SS disability due to health issues and was curious if I should wait or claim my regular Social Security retirement benefits now.

Signed: Disabled but Wondering

Dear Disabled but Wondering:

If you are now collecting Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and you are still disabled, it would be a disadvantage to claim your SS retirement benefits at this time age 62 or even at age 65. That's because your SSDI benefit is the same as your Full Retirement Age amount, as calculated for you at the point you became disabled. Born after 1959, your FRA is age 67, but you are already receiving your FRA benefit while on SS disability even though you have not yet reached your full retirement age. That full SSDI benefit will automatically convert to become your SS retirement benefit when you reach your full retirement age.

If you were to claim your normal SS retirement benefit any earlier than your SS full retirement age of 67, the amount you get would be reduced for claiming

early. At your current age, you would likely get between 75% and 80% of what you are now receiving on SSDI (depending on your exact age in the month you claim and at age 65 you would get about 87% of what you are now receiving on Social Security disability.

In other words, as long as your disability continues and you remain eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, you should not switch to your normal SS retirement benefit, because you would get less money. And the resulting benefit reduction would be permanent.

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.

Testing and taking inventory of seed is a good practice to start the new gardening season off right

I don't know about you, but I have been caught up in spirit of the holidays. It's been fun to indulge in family time and try and get caught up on much-needed rest.

I have given myself this last week of the year to continue to take it easy before I hit the "to do" list.

One of the big things I have been procrastinating on at work is taking inventory of all the seeds I have left from the last couple of years. The box holds a hundred or so different varieties of seeds, mostly heirloom, open-pollinated types.

There is something refreshing about accomplishing this task soon into the new year; a seasonal habit I've had for the last four decades give or take. To me, it means spring is not far behind.

I begin by organizing the seeds first by category: vegetable, flower or herb, then alphabetically. After those piles have been made, I go back and decide which packets are no good or no longer of use.

No matter how well they are stored, some seeds won't germinate well past the year in which they are sold for. Based on my experience these include hybrid onions and parsnips. Carrots can be iffy.

In the herb category dill, caraway, parsley, angelica

and chives come to mind. Year old garden heliotrope, feverfew and bellflowers can be stubborn germinators as far as flowers go.

may decide to sow the seed more thickly or just start over with a fresh batch.

Last year I did my own version of a germination test by sowing few seeds of questionable varieties in pots, and placing them on a shelf near my wood stove. I learned which seeds were worth the effort of sowing in the garden and which I needed to discard and order new.

Although viability decreases as seeds age, proper storage can insure that you will get at least three years worth of sprouting out of many of your favorites. It is important to fold over used seed packets and seal them with tape after use, and if you are just getting to it now, it's better late than never. Put them in a location that is cool and dry.

Since temperatures around 37-41 degrees are ideal, many people assume that storage in the refrigerator is preferred. It is, as long as the seeds are first placed in an airtight container along with a desiccant to absorb moisture. Desiccants such as silica gel are available in the floral section of craft shops, or you can reuse the pouches of silica that come in vitamin bottles or shoe boxes.

If you'd rather not take up space in your fridge, storing the container of seeds in

Please see **GARDEN**, page 5



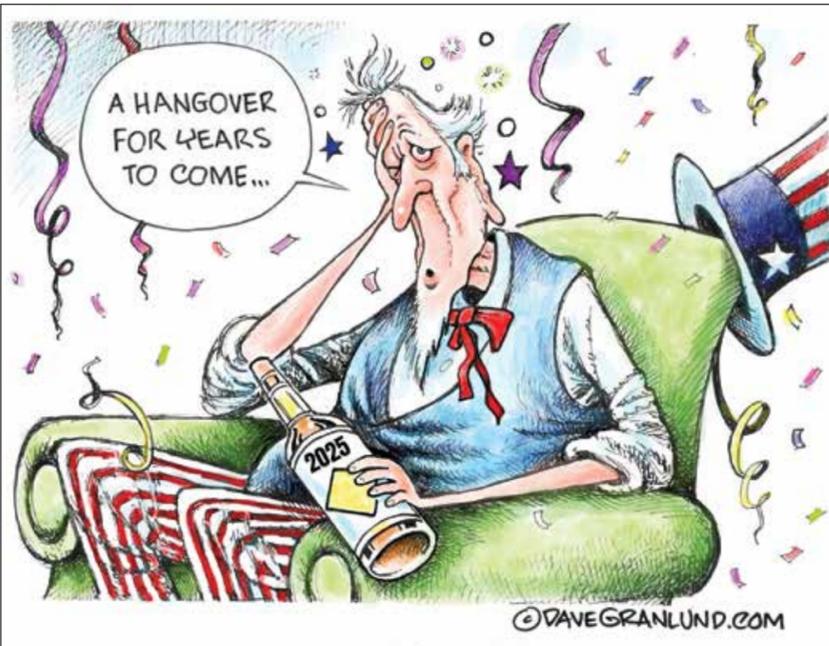
As a general rule I keep seed that is less than three years old, unless the variety in question is rare. Even spotty germination is better than nothing when it comes to seed that is hard to find.

You can save yourself disappointment at planting time by performing a simple germination test on questionable seed.

Place a few seeds in a moist paper towel. Roll it up and seal it in a plastic bag in a warm location.

Instructions in the seed catalog or on the packet should tell you how long it takes for germination to occur, as well as inform you of the initial germination percentage. Once the necessary amount of time has elapsed unroll the paper towel and determine how viable your seeds are by observing the sprouting that has occurred.

Based on the results you



Support Your Local Newspaper

The Massachusetts Audubon Society reported a sighting of a sora on Nauset Beach in Orleans on Cape Cod between Dec. 10 and 16.

Soras are small, chubby, chicken like birds with long toes and between eight to ten inches tall. Their stubby bill distinguished them from other rails in the United States and Canada, which have longer bills. They also frequently hold their short tail cocked up showing their white patch under the tail.

Soras are mottled gray and brown with white-edged feathers, but the feature that stands out the most is their yellow candy-corn bill. Other field marks include a black mask, throat patch and vertical white lines on the sides. Females tend to be less brightly colored than males and have less black on the face and throat. Juveniles also lack the black mask.

Soras have a distinct walk pushing their head forward with every step while nervously flicking the tail upward, exposing the white under tail feathers. They tend to forage in dense vegetation, but also venture into open areas from time to time. Their long toes help them walk on top of floating mats of vegetation. Soras make their homes

in freshwater wetlands with emergent vegetation such as cattails, sedges and rushes. During migration and winter, they also use brackish marshes, flooded fields and wet pastures.

The Sora makes its presence known with plaintive whistles and



By Ellenor Downer

whinnies rising from the marshes all across North America. Despite its abundance, it is not often seen: As with other rails, it spends most of its time hidden in dense marshy growth or wet meadows. Occasionally it will walk about in full view at the edge of a pond, delighting any birders, who happen to be nearby. Although Soras might seem like weak fliers when seen fluttering over the marsh, they regularly migrate long distances, many going to South America for the winter.

Cape Cod bird sightings

Besides the sora, the following sightings were reported between Dec. 10 and Dec.16. A western tanager

was found at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay sanctuary. The male painted bunting continued at a feeder in Brewster. Other bird sightings included a clapper rail and six western willets in South Chatham, two common terns in North Chatham, a blue-headed vireo and a yellow-breasted chat in South Orleans, a common yellowthroat and for northern shovelers in Harwich and a short-eared owl.

Birds seen at Race Point in Provincetown were a black guillemot, 200 razorbills, 13 dovebies, three common murrelets, 45 black-legged kittiwakes, six Iceland gulls, a red-necked grebe and 75 northern gannets.

Other sightings around the Cape included two continuing Eurasian wigeon in Yarmouth Port, two Barrow's goldeneyes at Loop Beach in Cotuit, a great egret at Mass Audubon's Skunknet River sanctuary in Barnstable, a Nashville warbler reported at a house in Yarmouth, continuing unseasonably large numbers of tree swallows in various places including over 50 in Falmouth, two western willets in Chatham and an American golden plover in North Truro.

Christmas bird count

From Dec. 15 to Jan. 5, the Christmas Bird Count



Sora

will commence in the U.S., Canada and 18 other countries in the Western Hemisphere. Countries are divided into geographical regions with 35 in Massachusetts and each region will pick a single 24-hour period to count birds. Data from the CBC can be utilized in many ways, including to monitor trends in bird populations, document range shifts over time and examine how climate change may impact the winter distributions of birds.

CBC data has been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications and government reports over the decades.

Birds likely seen in Massachusetts are chickadees, titmice, many species of woodpeckers, bluebirds, Carolina wren and many raptors. Mi-

OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed. Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to townreminder@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to Town Reminder, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Turley Election Policy

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

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

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June

GCAM gets a new logo to represent Granby's story

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

GRANBY – One of the best ways to share and celebrate a town is by representing what makes it truly special, and GCAM does exactly that, making sure meetings, games, and events are recorded for all to view.

Graphic Designer Serena Morris joined GCAM at the perfect time as executive director, Cáit Cullen, was looking towards rebranding and changing the logo.

Before, the logo was a black circle with a blue dinosaur wearing a hat, a classic nod to the idea that Granby is known for its dinosaurs, but Cullen had plans to grow and change GCAM into something better, something more.

"The hardest part was trying to come up with something that was not only just GCAM, but Granby, Mass," said Morris. "And finding a still recent symbol that's still here and is distinctly Granby was hard to choose from."

"We wanted the logo to pay homage to not just GCAM and what it does, as well as what our town is like and something people would recognize instantly," said Cullen.

The new logo, after plan-



Turley Photo by Emily-Rose Pappas
Serena Morris and Cáit Cullen of GCAM with their new logo.

ning, moving, and chatting, ultimately fell with one building as its center, the library, as well as farmland behind it, to celebrate the town's history as a farming community.

"The library is just a huge part of our community, and we felt it deserved the attention to be at the center of our logo, and also as a mirror of how close we work together," said Cullen.

"This rebranding is part of a larger rebranding, but has also been another part of updating our assets. It was always my goal to update the logo, and Serena arrived at the perfect time."

"You want people to know that you're here, and I really hope that people love this new logo just as much as we do," said Morris.

Mosier Elementary School students show off their works of art

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

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley PTA helped to set up an art show at Mosier Elementary School, and donated ice cream to be enjoyed by all the little artists at the school under the instruction of art teacher Fred Bird.

Mr. Bird spent time organizing and planning projects for each of the grades at the elementary school with different media and styles of art projects.

Mr. Bird has found joy in being the art teacher at Mosier, coming up with art projects that are both challenging and fun for the students to take part in, all while considering the objectives for their learning.

"Visual arts have a wide range of learning standards, from art history to technical skills. My lessons are designed to address difficult topics and skills," said Bird. "I often choose artists to serve as inspiration for



Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas
Myles Mallory, in second grade, standing proudly with his black cat drawing.

are work, other times I think about the type of work I want students to learn about, such as sculpture, and build the lesson from there."

Art projects included clay sculptures and some with cardboard, abstract drawings, still lifes, and more in mediums ranging from crayons to markers, cut paper, and paint.

"I taught a lesson on text and designing a speech bubble as, well as going over what positive sayings/affir-

mations could be. The fourth graders created these creatures with collage supplies, which allowed them to practice and build on their previous use of collage this year. Then we moved on to the new element of text design," said Bird.

The halls and cafeteria were filled to the brim with family and friends here to see the art the students worked hard to create, and spend time reading the informational pieces about each grouping of artwork.

"I'm so proud of the wide range of the students created. They were able to use different materials and a variety of techniques," said Jennifer Voyik. "It was clear they had the opportunity to explore, be creative, and express themselves through their art."

Mosier Elementary School showed its love and celebration of its students with the show, and is looking forward to future art shows to come.

July

Four towns celebrate successful food drives

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

REGION – The four Democratic Committees of Granby, Belchertown, South Hadley, and Ludlow worked together to put together food drives in order to support the local food pantries.

Susie Knightly, Ann Stockton, Cara Lapenas, and Mia Alves worked and met together for several months to plan the massive food drive to fight food insecurity and fill local pantries.

"[The most meaningful part was] having members of our committee and community come together and pitch in to make the food drive successful," said Stockton.

"The most meaningful part of the day was meeting new neighbors and savoring a deep sense of community from our shared concerns. So many are shocked by the reported cuts to funding to our food pantries. We hope to step up and fill the needs of our neighbors in need, especially the children," said Knightly.

The Granby food drive

collected over 400 total items, including cans, boxes, and bags of grains and cereals, and other items, as well as \$1,000 total in cash donations from the community who came to support Granby to Go.

At Ludlow's Veterans Pantry, they filled all nine totes full to the brim of food donations.

"The timing of this was great as the food bank is closed for the end of fiscal year inventory so the Veterans pantry did not pick up their usual load this past week. The Veterans Pantry goes through 10,000 pounds of food per week. Thank you to all who came out. Lots of great food, variety."

Over 70 cars came to the South Hadley High School's parking lot to bring their food donations, and State Representative Homar Gomez was there helping load the trucks.

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors van ended up filled with 1968 pounds of food donations, and \$960 from the generous community's donations.

"Food pantries do the 'unseen' work in our com-

munities. Learning about the volunteers who run Helping Hands, putting faces to those who quietly do this work day in and day out, and hearing directly what the needs are," said Lapenas.

Amy Eyler-Pelletier, food pantry coordinator for Helping Hands Cupboard, shared that they have been receiving less and less donations, and they need help now more than ever to keep their shelves stocked in order to help their communities.

The following items are especially needed: soup, hot and cold cereal, canned meat, tomato products, shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, and women's hygiene products. You can also always make monetary donations to all of the pantries so they can continue to stock their shelves for those who need them.

You can look at the pantry's websites to find their distribution days and schedules, as well as volunteer and monetary needs to keep these vital organizations running in our communities.

Buttery Brook Park opens brand new disc golf course for community



Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

Posing for a photo, proud of their work.

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

SOUTH HADLEY – Buttery Brook Park was filled to the brim with people came to enjoy the weekly Cruise Night, as well as a Grand Opening of the new Disc Golf Course.

"We were thrilled with the turnout of support for the new course and were glad to have both Senator Oliveira and Representative Gomez, along with South Hadley Assistant Town Administrator Chuck Romboletti, and the South Hadley/Granby Chamber of Commerce join us for the ribbon cutting ceremony and the opening "first toss"," said event organizer Kim Prough.

Over 350 people came to the grand opening, enjoying the beautiful weather, and see the opening of the 9-hole course, beginner-friendly and ready for all ages to enjoy.

Planning began with an advisory group of eight people, where they began plotting the digging and mapping of the course with help from Chris Barden from New England Disc Gold in mid-March, and by early May, the work began with purchasing supplies, and laying down the groundwork for the course.

The advisory group raised funds to purchase the artificial turf for the tee pads, create the tee sign designs, purchase materials for signage, and had some funds available for future maintenance needs

and concerns.

"We both want to grow the disc golf community. Especially with children and families. It's a great game with many health benefits. I hope to see many people of all ages enjoying the course. Anyone from 8 to 80 can play, although it can be difficult to master," said Maddy Venancio.

You can learn more about the art of disc golf and check out disc golf sets to borrow at both the South Hadley Public Library and the Senior Center. You can also find them on Facebook, and for any additional information, email them at butterybrookdiscgolf@gmail.com.

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 9

GARDEN from page 4

a cabinet in a dry part of the house will also work.

Whatever you do, don't put them in a hot attic or damp basement! It is also not a good idea to purchase seeds from stores that have their seed displays in greenhouses. Temperature and moisture extremes can affect viability even if the seeds are brand new!

Some seed companies sell their seed in foil-lined packets. These are very good at keeping them fresh for the longest amount of time – especially if they are unopened. Now that you have inven-

toried your seeds, it will be a whole lot of fun to order exactly what you need. That's what I will be doing after one more family game night and that last Christmas movie!

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

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Tigers remain perfect in league with win

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

South Hadley—It has been more than 10 years since the South Hadley boys' basketball team has won a league title. The Tigers re-

mained undefeated in league play following a thrilling 71-70 victory over Suburban South Division rival Belchertown before a large crowd at South Hadley's Thomas B. Landers Court on Dec. 22.

"We now have a 3-0 league record, and this is a very big league win for us," said South Hadley junior guard Noah

Hambley. "Belchertown is a very good basketball team, and it was a hard fought battle, but we managed to come out on top."

The Tigers, who had a 3-2 overall record, haven't lost to the Orioles on their home court since the 2018-19 regular season.

"This is probably the best

high school gym in Western Mass.," said South Hadley head coach Chris Gerber. "More than just the players parents come watch us play. We always have a large student section. It's a very special place."

The last time that the Tigers won a league title was during the 2012-13 season.

The only other Suburban South Division team that still had an undefeated league record was East Longmeadow (2-0).

Belchertown and South Hadley are both first-year members of the Suburban South Division. They both

Please see **LEAGUE**, page 7



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Griffin Soderbaum attempts a three-pointer.



Chase Pecia goes for the bank shot.



Isiah James gets ready to go up for a shot.



Noah Hambley is ready to make a layup attempt.

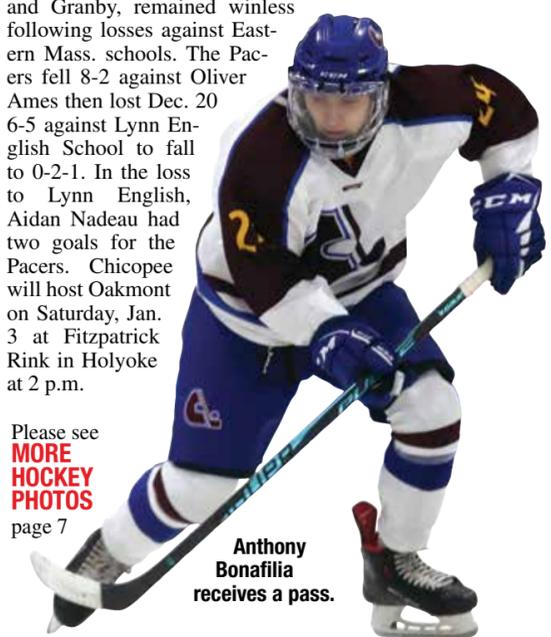
Chicopee hockey remains winless



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Carter Guoin looks to make a save.

HOLYOKE – The Chicopee co-op ice hockey team, which includes Chicopee, Chicopee Comprehensive, South Hadley, and Granby, remained winless following losses against Eastern Mass. schools. The Pacers fell 8-2 against Oliver Ames then lost Dec. 20 6-5 against Lynn English School to fall to 0-2-1. In the loss to Lynn English, Aidan Nadeau had two goals for the Pacers. Chicopee will host Oakmont on Saturday, Jan. 3 at Fitzpatrick Rink in Holyoke at 2 p.m.

Please see **MORE HOCKEY PHOTOS** page 7



Anthony Bonafilia receives a pass.

Rams now a perfect 4-0



Kalli White hustles down the court.



Kaitlyn Curran tries to push the ball toward the corner.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Brenna Moreno tries to come down with a rebound.

GRANBY – Heading into the Christmas holiday, it has been a good run to start the season for Granby High School girls basketball. The Rams improved to 4-0 with wins recently against Ludlow,

Palmer, and Monson. The Rams last played Dec. 23, defeating Monson 68-24. In the big offensive win against the Mustangs, 10 different players scored for the Rams, with Kalli White leading the charge with 27

points. Brenna Moreno had 12 points. Granby returns to action on Jan. 2 against Amherst Regional at 7 p.m.



Meredith Bartosz heads for a layup during recent action against Ludlow.



Rowan Cook readies to receive a pass.



Eleanor Szlosek makes a quick pass.

T-Birds get big comeback for win over Bridgeport

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (10-12-4-2) overcame a two-goal deficit with less than eight minutes remaining en route to a stunning 4-3 overtime win over the Bridgeport Islanders (11-14-2-1) on Sunday afternoon inside the MassMutual Center.

In desperate need of a pick-me-up, the Springfield power play drew first blood just seven seconds into their first opportunity, as Samuel Johannesson whistled a one-timer over Henrik Tikkanen's blocker arm at 6:33 of the first. Johannesson's second goal of the season, set up by Alek Kaskimaki, was just Springfield's second power-play goal in its last 26 man advantages.

After a relatively quiet opening half of the period, T-Birds netminder Georgi Romanov was far busier in the closing six minutes of the frame, denying all 11 shots that came his way in the first 20 minutes.

Bridgeport's rugged pressure paid dividends at 4:30 of the second as Joey Larson chopped a net front shot past Romanov, tying the game at 1 apiece on Larson's fifth goal in six games against Springfield.

In a period that saw the Isles outshoot Springfield 15-3, the visitors vaulted to the lead at 15:35 as Cam Thiesing intercepted a pass deep in the T-Birds end and whistled a wrister over Romanov's blocker to send the game to the intermission with Bridge-

port in front, 2-1.

Sean Day further buoyed the Islanders' lead at 3:57 of the third, as he picked up a loose puck in the slot off a Thiesing faceoff win and snapped a forehander through Romanov's stick side, ballooning the Bridgeport lead to 3-1.

With the T-Birds in dire need of a jolt, the power play provided just that at 13:03 as Marc-Andre Gaudet gathered a puck inside the right-wing circle and wired home his first AHL goal under the crossbar behind Tikkanen, making it a one-goal game with 6:57 remaining.

With Romanov on the bench for an extra skater, the T-Birds got payback on the Islanders, who tied a game last month under similar circumstances. Luff cradled the puck along the right-wing circle and funneled a pass across the crease, where Dillon Dube steered it behind Tikkanen, tying the score with just 1:05 remaining.

As a result, the game went to overtime, and after coming up short in each of their prior six games that extended past regulation, the T-Birds did not allow a similar outcome this time. Just 43 seconds into overtime, Luff gathered the puck and scooted around a defender down the left wing, drove to his forehand side, and lifted a wrister past Tikkanen, picking up his third point and third game-winning goal to secure the come-from-behind victory.

Candidates for 2026 HoopHall announced

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the list of eligible candidates for the Class of 2026, featuring several high-profile first-time nominees.

Notable new candidates for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2026 include the 1996 USA Basketball Women's National Team, Mike D'Antoni, Jamal Crawford, Elena Delle Donne, Blake Griffin, Joe Johnson, Candace Parker, Bruce Pearl, and Kelvin Sampson. Marv Albert, Mark Few, Doc Rivers, and Amar'e Stoudemire are among returning

eligible candidates. "The candidates for the Class of 2026 have each left an indelible impact on the game of basketball," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. "Through defining performances, influential leadership, and achievements that helped elevate the sport on the national and international stage, this year's ballot recognizes those whose legacy continues to shape how the game is played, coached, and celebrated."

The first look at the list of eligible nominees was provided by "NBA Today"

on ESPN, hosted by Malika Andrews, with Ramona Shelburne, Tim Bontemps, Kendrick Perkins, and Shams Charania in studio. A complete list of eligible candidates can be found below.

Finalists chosen from the applicable Category Screening Committees for the Class of 2026 will be announced at a later date. The entire Class of 2026 will be unveiled during a nationally televised broadcast on Saturday, April 4, during Final Four Weekend.

The Finalist and Class Announcement times and broadcast networks will be announced by Monday, Feb. 9.

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, Aug. 14, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, followed by the Enshrinement Ceremony the next day at Springfield's historic Symphony Hall.

All VIP Packages, single-event tickets to the Ceremony, Tip-Off Celebration, and Awards Gala, as well as other ancillary events, will go on sale on Saturday, Apr. 4. All packages and tickets will be available for purchase at hoopHall.com.

The complete listing of events and pricing will be released on Monday, Feb. 9.

MORE CHICOPEE HOCKEY PHOTOS from page 7



Abie Aponte tries to work the puck away from the wall.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Owen Buchanan goes after the loose puck.

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LEAGUE from page 6

competed in the Bi-County East league during the past couple of years.

When the Orioles and the Tigers faced each other inside the old South Hadley gym a year ago, Hambley scored 25 points with the help of six 3-pointers leading the Tigers to a 23 point victory.

"This is a very difficult place for a visiting team to play a game," said Belchertown head coach Jim Hart. "It's always loud here and there was a lot of people here tonight."

Hambley, whose aunt, Jes, is the school's all-time leading scorer with 2,069 points, scored a team-high 29 points in the first meeting of this season between the two squads.

Junior forward Tim Loughrey, whose older brother, Jack, joined the elite 1,000th club last year as a senior, chipped in with 20 points. The Tigers' other double-digit scorer was senior guard Isiah James with 10 points.

"We played unselfish basketball tonight, which led us to the win," Loughrey said. "This is our biggest win so far this year. We're hoping to win the league title."

The Orioles (2-2, 1-2) also had three players reach

double-digits led by junior forward Brice Letendre with a game-high 35 points. He missed tying his career-high by two points.

"Brice is an outstanding basketball player," Hart said. "He plays the game with a lot of energy. He dominated tonight's game."

On December 18, 2024, Letendre scored 37 points leading the Orioles to an 80-68 home win versus Hoosac Valley.

Sophomore guard Andrew Wright made three 3-pointers leading to his 11 points and senior guard Austin Raymer finished the game with 10 points for the visiting team.

The score was tied for the final time at 67-67 with a minute remaining in the fourth quarter.

A Loughrey driving lay-up down the lane gave his team a two point lead with 33 seconds showing on the scoreboard clock.

With 5.3 seconds left, Hambley was fouled following a steal. He made both foul shots, which sealed the Tigers' second home victory.

"It's a lot easier making foul shots late in front of the home fans," Hambley said. "The atmosphere is always great here. It was a fun game tonight and I'm just glad my

team won."

Letendre made a 3-pointer at the buzzer, but the visitors came up one point short.

At the start of the game, Wright sank a 3-pointer from the left corner and Raymer followed with an inside hoop giving the Orioles a 5-0 lead.

South Hadley responded with an impressive 17-2 run during the next six minutes.

The trio of Hambley, Loughrey, and junior guard Chase Pecia (4 points) combined to score all the Tigers points.

The home team built a 17-7 lead with a minute left in the opening quarter following a Hambley lay-up.

Another lay-up from James gave South Hadley a 21-11 advantage a little more than a minute into the second quarter.

The Orioles then put together a 14-4 run.

In the middle of the second quarter, Letendre and Wright buried 3-pointers. That was followed by back-to-back slam dunks by junior forward Shea MacLean (6 points). It tied the score for the first time at 25-25 with 3:20 left in the opening half.

Letendre scored the Orioles final eight points of the second quarter, but the Tigers held a slim 36-35 halftime ad-

vantage.

With 7:27 left in the third quarter, the Orioles retook the lead for the first time since the beginning of the game at 38-36 when Wright made a pair of free throws.

The Orioles managed to hold onto the lead for the rest of the third quarter with the help of Letendre, who scored 13 points during that stretch on five inside baskets and a 3-pointer.

After Letendre began the final quarter with another inside hoop making the score 60-51, the Tigers scored ten unanswered points.

Loughrey began the run with a fastbreak lay-up. Then senior guard Griff Soderbaum (6 points) and Hambley buried 3-pointers, which closed the gap to 60-59 with six minutes remaining.

The Tigers retook the lead (61-60) following another Loughrey lay-up.

The score was tied one final time at 67 before the home team made a couple of clutch shots down the stretch.

South Hadley, who played its final game of 2025, will be looking to sweep the season series for the second consecutive year when they make the 10-mile trek down Rte. 202 to Belchertown High School on Feb. 3.



Turley photo by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Tim Loughrey lines up a short-range shot.

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August YEAR IN REVIEW from page 5

Learning the way of the sword with Castle Nitor

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

BELCHERTOWN – The Gaylord Memorial Library, in the spirit of “Levelling Up” this summer, hosted Castle Nitor, where Allison Pettengail taught the European martial art of the long sword and the basics of using the weapon.

“...What I like about this as a theme for the libraries is that reading is amazing for you and learning in general changes you and makes you a better person,” said Pettengail.

The lessons are taught from a variety of old European texts, where the masters themselves wrote out their lessons and drew pictures, but in a language that is now dead, making the process challenging.

The tradition of European martial arts was almost lost due to the introduction of gunpowder and firearms, but people today have found a way to revive the old ways of the sword.



Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas
Allison Pettengail teaching how a sword can be used to inflict the most damage.

The lesson teaches students to guard, but also how to move when “cutting” so that they are protecting themselves. It then selects a picture from one of the manuals

to help people figure out how to do it.

Students learned to hold the sword and how to swing it the right way. The lessons bring you into history in a more real way, where you can experience it as you learn about what the masters of old taught and how they fought.

“It is fun, and it is challenging, and you get to reach out and hit your friends,” Pettengail joked. “It’s a lot of fun, though, and learning the techniques is a lot of fun.”

Learning the way of the sword also helps dispel a popular myth that longswords are heavy, whereas the reality is that they are much lighter, only about two to four pounds each, to make swinging the sword easier and much more realistic.

“I believe that for anyone who studies anything in history, getting to dispel all the myths is the best part,” said Pettengail.

Learning to wield a sword is a fun and engaging way to learn an ancient martial art, and its unique and wonderful history all at once.

Kids learn the art of robotics with local high school students



Turley photos by Emily-Rose Pappas

Sophia Sarage, Gideon Antonowicz, Ella Wong, Libby Smith, Andrew Weston, Holden Castenson, and Uri Davidovitch with their robots.

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

SOUTH HADLEY — Being able to work at and share the things you love most in this world is a special privilege, and for the students at Amherst Regional High School who love robotics, Saturday was the perfect day.

Kids got the chance to color pictures of electronics, take a remote control to guide a robot through the tape mazes on the floor, and play with a coded mouse to guide it through another maze to get to the cheese at the end.

The students led a robotics demo for kids and teens at the South Hadley Public Library last weekend, and the room filled with kids getting

to direct real robots through challenging mazes and learn a bit about how they work.

The ARHS Robotics Team competes yearly in the First Tech Challenge, with challenges that lovers of robotics come up with a new robot design for the given prompt and challenge, then compete with other robots across the state.

“We’re really lucky to have the robotics club we have,” said Libby Smith. “We care a lot about building a community in the school.”

During the challenge, the students present their robot to the judges and also share their passions and what they love most about the art and have won the Motivate Award with their matching T-shirts in pink, The Hare Bears, after their beloved teacher.

After budget cuts, many schools and their students may not have access to science curriculum, and this program of outreach helped to bring science and knowledge about the engineering industry to students all over the community.

“Each of the members of the Team has different roles, whether it’s organizing and planning the events, coding, or directing the group; each of these students brings in their strengths to the team to help lift all parts of it,” said Ella Wong.

“It’s been one of the best learning experiences I’ve ever had because we’re learning through doing the things—through building, coding, and seeing how it all works,” said Gideon Antonowicz.

September

DinoFest comes back for another successful year

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

GRANBY – For the past 11 years, the town has come together to celebrate the annual DinoFest put on by the Granby United Church of Christ.

DinoFest’s history begins as it was originally called the Dinosaur Arts, Crafts, and Music Festival, and was later taken over by Dennis Doucette, the Chair/Organizer and “Grand Poobah,” who has truly fallen in love with DinoFest, and the “hugs and smiles” found throughout the

one-day festival. The Grand Poobah Dennis Doucette was joined by Marketing Wizard Tasondra Jardine, who helped with publicity, took photos, and more, and Brian Pike, the Land Baron, who set up the layout for DinoFest.

The tight-knit families that call Granby home are what make Dino Fest so special, with crafters and vendors returning year after year for a one-of-a-kind celebration of a very unique community.

“We did it this year on a smaller scale to focus on

Crafters’ needs and Community engagement,” said Tasondra Jardine, the Marketing Wizard. “We had local musician Marvin Jackson perform, as well as Solar Eclipse, which was provided by a grant from the Granby Cultural Council. We had two teen title holders from the Mrs. America and a few new surprises.”

The DinoDash, an annual tradition now, had its third year of fun in order to raise money for local food pantries, including Granby to Go.

“We had some fantastic

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 10

Obituary

Lois R. (Helm) Duso

Lois R. (Helm) Duso, of Northfield, MA, passed away peacefully at her home after a long illness on December 28, 2025. She was born on January 1, 1948 to the late Arnold and Dorothy (Hartt) Helm. Lois was a graduate of Granby High School in Granby, MA.

She worked at the Belchertown State School and the Hampshire County Collaborative, where she worked with her favorite little ones and learned American Sign Language. For many years, she continued her passion for teaching young children by offering a day care business in her home. Later in life, she owned another business, but this time working with senior citizens. Lois enjoyed playing chip ‘n putt golf, fishing, bowling, and card games with friends and family throughout the years. She had a passion for painting, specifically her favorite flowers, irises,

which she also grew in her garden. She adored dancing around to her favorite music with her husband, Randy. Lois was always smiling; she had a very upbeat attitude and always looked at the positive things in life.

She is survived by her devoted, caring, and loving husband of 32 years, Randy Duso of Northfield, MA; daughter, Sonja Gougeon and her husband, Dale; sons, William Scheinost and Steven Scheinost; siblings, Arnold Helm and his wife Jeanne of Maine, Richard Helm and his wife Donna of Belchertown, Bruce Helm of South Hadley, and Conrad Helms of Northampton; and her grandchildren, Ava Gougeon, Drew Scheinost and Ashley Scheinost. Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Diane Helm Scheinost of South Hadley.

Lois will be truly missed



Death Notice

Lois R. (Helm) Duso
Died December 28
Services Beers &
Story South Hadley
Funeral Home

and remembered by all who knew and loved her.

Visitation will be held on Monday, January 5, 2026, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Beers & Story South Hadley Funeral Home. Family and friends are welcome to gather at the funeral home the following morning, January 6, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. for Lois’ funeral service beginning at 10 a.m. at the Beers & Story South Hadley Funeral Home. Burial will immediately follow in West St. Cemetery in Granby, MA.

Her family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in her memory to the Alzheimer’s Association, 309 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham, MA 02452, or the Massachusetts General Hospital, Multiple Sclerosis Clinic, 125 Nashua Street, Suite 540, Boston, MA 02114.

Public Notices

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampshire Division
Docket No.
HS25P0740EA
Estate of:
Joseph Berman
Date of Death:
November 11, 2025
INFORMAL PROBATE
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Lisa A Goldberg of South Hadley, MA**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate. **Lisa A Goldberg of South Hadley, 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. 01/02/2026

Town of Granby Massachusetts

Conservation Commission
The Granby Conservation Commission will hold Public Hearings pursuant to the Wetland Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40) on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026** *1 Library Lane- Carnegie Building-Top Floor to consider the following:

1. **7:30 pm “RDA”** filed by Benjamin Kindell, owner a to see whether the area depicted on plan(s) referenced is subject to the jurisdiction of the Wetlands Protection Act, and to see whether the boundaries of resource

area depicted on plans/maps referenced are accurately delineated with regards to property located on 0 South Street (adjacent to 82-88 South St.) and known as Map 4-B Lot A/2-2, in the Town of Granby.

Members of the public can attend virtually by phone at +1 (312) 757-3121 using Access Code: 282-289-421 or by visiting <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/282289421>.

Anyone wishing information and/or to be heard on this matter should appear at the time and place designated. The complete materials (including text and maps) relative to this “RDA” are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Selectmen’s Office located in the Granby Senior Center Building, 2nd Floor, 10-B West State Street. Additionally, copies of the application may be inspected on the Conservation Commission’s web page at www.granby-ma.gov.

William Shaheen, Chair
Granby Conservation
Commission

01/02/2026

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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Lakes
- 6. Electromotive force
- 9. Invests in little enterprises
- 13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach
- 14. Small sailboat
- 15. Actor Idris
- 16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- 17. System that detects objects under water
- 18. Harsh, grating noise
- 19. Steward
- 21. A fencing sword
- 22. Infections
- 23. Actress Ryan
- 24. Sodium
- 25. Swedish castle
- 28. A lump of slime
- 29. African antelope
- 31. Insurance providers
- 33. Choosy

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Millisecond
- 2. Spanish city
- 3. A sudden very loud sound
- 4. “The Indiana Jones of beer”
- 5. Tin
- 6. Sea eagles
- 7. Volcanic crater
- 8. Type of coat
- 9. Women’s apartments in Ottoman palace
- 10. Divulge a secret
- 11. Norwegian playwright
- 12. “It’s a Wonderful Life” director
- 14. Poisonous perennial plant
- 17. 18-year astronomical period
- 20. Clothes
- 21. Places to sit
- 23. Family of regulator genes
- 25. New York ballplayer
- 26. Impressive in size or scope
- 27. Jacques __, French

- biologist
- 29. One from the Big Apple
- 30. Genus of woolly lemurs
- 32. Songs to one’s beloved
- 34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand
- 35. Supplemented with difficulty
- 37. Farewell
- 40. Investment account (abbr.)
- 42. One from Utah
- 43. Begets
- 47. A male child
- 49. Break apart
- 50. Brief appearance
- 52. Partner to “oohed”
- 53. A light informal meal
- 55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface
- 56. One billionth of a second
- 57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 58. Close tightly
- 59. Mail out
- 61. Language
- 65. Computer characteristic

September YEAR IN REVIEW from page 9

entrants; so much so, the crowd couldn't decide a people's choice recipient, and all were awarded a trophy," said Jardine.

The Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts was there, and the Mulder family ran a booth with A Moment of Magic Foundation.

"The Mulder's son won DinoDash last year. They wanted to give others the chance to have awesome dinosaur costumes as well. It was a way for them to give back to a community that supports them," said Jardine. "This is the playgroup that Center Church in South Hadley hosts on the third Saturday of every month for people of all ages with Down syndrome."

"As always, we couldn't do any of it without our church family of volunteers and the community partners. Our sponsors and the people who attend year after year spreading the Word," said Jardine.

Dino Fest has been, and will continue to be, one of the community's favorite events of the year, bringing in people of all ages to enjoy a dinosaur-themed day of fun.



Submitted photo
Dennis Doucette, Isaac Simpson, and Zippy the Dino enjoying their day.

October



Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

The school team dedicated to getting the kitchen back up and running.

Granby's Jr./Sr. High School hosts a grand opening of its kitchen

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

GRANBY – After closing its doors for what was thought to be only two weeks on March 13, 2020, to address a ventilation problem, the pandemic hit, and it resulted in the closure of the Granby J./Sr. High School's kitchen.

The kitchen hosted a special grand opening this week of the kitchen, and a soft opening the week before for the students to have access to their kitchen once more.

"I love being able to have the kitchen back for us to serve lunch to the students," said Ericka Barnes, who has worked as a food server for three years at the school.

"Some of these kids weren't able to have access to a kitchen since seventh grade, and they're in their senior year now," said Superintendent Mary Jane Rickson.

During the five years the kitchen was closed down, Kathy Berger, the chef's assistant, would spend time running back and forth between the elementary school and high school with cartloads of food through rain, snow, or sunshine so the high school could have its lunch.

The grand opening ceremony of the newly refurbished kitchen allowed the students to finally have a space to eat for the first time since returning from remote learning.

"It means a lot to see the kids and the looks on their faces at all the changes," said Ken LaPage, Director of Dining Services. "It was very challenging to do all of that for five years, but we made it work."

"We are just so excited to have this happen," said Rickson. "It was needed, and it's excellent to have the students have this space again and be

able to experience walking through a real, high school lunch line."

"I just want to thank them," said Todd Dorman, Director of Finances, about the many architects, electricians, and other members who worked hard to get the kitchen finished. "Our ability to serve meals was really compromised, but the students and staff are really thankful to have this now."

The renovations in total were over \$600,000 in order to install the new ventilation systems throughout the cafeteria, kitchen, weight room, and wrestling room, and included installing a new hood system with fire suppression, work on air ducts, a new air handling unit, and a rooftop unit.

"The kids have been super resilient and patient, and the time is finally here, and I'm so grateful," said Principal Alison Jordan-Gagner.

November

South Hadley Players bring 'Annie' to the stage

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

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Players are back for another fantastic performance, this time wowing the audience with their rendition of Annie.

The South Hadley Players have been together for two years, and this is their third show. Director Cyn Strycharz started the South Hadley Community Theatre in memory of her brother, Jon Sibley, who was an actor but passed

away. The name changed to Vlack Cat Theater before becoming the South Hadley Players, which has a scholarship to honor Jon, the Jon Sibley Scholarship at the high school.

"I love the cast and their excitement that they bring to each rehearsal. The kids are so adorable and fun, and the adults are all so talented. Speaking of talent, our Annie is amazing! She was born to be on Broadway," said Strycharz.

"I'm most excited about singing all of the songs, and

my favorite is Hard Knock Life," said Annie actor Brooke Lamovthe. "What I like most about performing is being Annie so I can be at the front, and my favorite part is when I get to sing my solo with the dogs."

Dozens of people of all ages take part in the play, from the youngest kid under ten, to older adults in their 60s performing like they did in school. The South Hadley Players is open to everyone who loves the stage and to perform.

"This play is a great way

November

to kick off the holiday season because it's right after Thanksgiving," said Butler Drake actor Jeremy Swartz. "Performing is my life, and it's something I want to do for the rest of my life."

Each of the characters has their own story, and their growth is seen throughout the story as the characters learn hard lessons and get through them.

"I love that my role has the ability to show growth, and he starts out really hard-hearted and softens through the show, and I'm really excited to bring that to the stage," said Keith Shannon, who plays Oliver "Daddy" Warbucks. "I'm super excited to be a part of this cast, and our little Annie is going to steal the show, and I'm really excited for everyone to see her and the show."

"I have been directing for over 30 years, and working with the cast, watching them grow, having them understand the story, helping them to tell the story, and then watching the audience be moved by the story [is the most rewarding part]," said Strycharz.



Turley photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

Brooke Lamovthe, age nine, playing the star of the show, Annie.

December

Community spreads holiday cheer to seniors



Submitted photos

TRIAD volunteers get ready to fill the holiday bags at the Police Station.

By Kim Prough

SOUTH HADLEY – Twenty-five different organizations and nearly 40 volunteers participated in this year's "Stockings for Seniors". "It was an incredible collective effort," said Janet Stawasz, vice president of the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors and organizer of this year's stocking coordination.

Stockings for Seniors is a collaboration between the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors and TRIAD. TRIAD, a community initiative that provides programs that support the safety of our seniors, is comprised of seniors, the Council on Aging, the police and fire departments, the Sheriff's Office, and the town's Health Department.

This year's efforts included contributions from several businesses, in addition to the Friends and TRIAD. The Friends of the South Hadley Seniors purchased stamps, magnifiers, and notepads. The Fire Departments contributed night lights, pill boxes, first aid kits, and puzzles.

The Health Department supplied Chapstick and hand sanitizer. Some businesses gave monetary donations to help with the purchasing of items such as lotion, planners and socks, while other businesses donated chip clips, tissues, toothbrushes, tooth-

paste, pens, notepads, playing cards, and candy.

Over 6,000 items were sorted into beautiful holiday bags. Stawasz decided to use holiday-themed bags instead of holiday stockings this year, which proved much easier to transport and deliver. The bags were assembled in November by members of TRIAD and at the Council on Aging by Friends' volunteers. They were distributed to nearly 350 seniors throughout town in December.

Bags were hand-delivered by the police department and both fire districts, along with the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors.

The Council on Aging, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and several churches also requested bags to deliver to some of their clients and parishioners who were alone and in need this holiday season.

This project brought much joy to both the volunteers and the recipients. In reflecting upon this year's efforts, Stawasz said, "Seeing how a simple act of care could bring joy to so many people reminded me of the power of community and teamwork. I am proud to have been a part of something that truly made a difference in people's lives."



Fire District 1 Firefighter Cameron Barnish and Firefighter/Paramedic Leo Couture deliver holiday bags to Lathrop Village residents.

Gaylord Memorial Library

47 College Street, South Hadley • (413) 538-5047

JANUARY EVENTS

BLOCK PRINTING WITH CASTLE NITOR

Thursday, Jan. 22 from 5-8 p.m. Registration Required

Join the staff of Castle Nitor, at Gaylord Memorial Library, for a fun lesson on block printing.

Use replica blocks of period prints and make your own blocks from potatoes. Take home a new treasure that you made on your own!

This event will be held on the lower level of the

Gaylord Memorial Library and is open to participants 12+

Pre-register at <https://shadleylib.libcal.com/event/15413404>