

# TOWN Reminder

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Brynn Adams, age 5, jumps in the snow during the new year's first snowstorm.

# 2024 Year in Review

JANUARY



Zoe Ferguson, 8, pulls her brother Caleb, age 10, while the snow flies around them.

## Having snow much fun

By Tina Lesniak  
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – Children enjoyed the first snowstorm of the new year, which piled close to a foot of snow in communities across the region.

Many took to sleds and skis, while others grabbed their shovels and got to work clearing driveways and walkways. Some were even joined by their four-legged friends.



Nina Levreault, age 12, and Anni Levreault, age 10, go backyard skiing with dog Louie.



Juliana Tarrats and Ilana Colon enjoyed the snow.

## Selectboard discusses funding and DEIB

By Nick Boonstra  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Town Administrator Lisa Wong and the Selectboard discussed efforts the town is taking toward making South Hadley a more equitable place, starting with the municipal government.

Wong and Assistant Town

Administrator Chuck Romboletti, in his role as Human Resources Director, updated members of the Selectboard and the community on the progress of ongoing projects the town is undertaking with the goal of improving equity in mind.

Romboletti briefed Selectboard members on the status of the town's Classification and

Compensation Study, which the town contracted with the University of Massachusetts Boston Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management to oversee in 2023.

The study is concerned with determining how closely current job descriptions and salaries for town employees do or do not align with the level of

work being done and the prevailing market conditions in similar communities.

The study will conclude with a report of recommendations for improvements the town can make in its job descriptions and salary structure, including the

Please see **SELECTBOARD**, page 5

## Enjoying the community

I began full-time writing for the Town Reminder back in June, and when I came and worked here in South Hadley and Granby, I really got to know the people within these vibrant communities.

From befriending people at the libraries and police stations, to finding repeat faces to say hello to at events, being able to be here in South Hadley and Granby to report on all of these amazing events has truly been a wonderful experience.

From taking part in the many big events at BATTERY BROOK PARK and the public libraries, to being able to be cover Dinofest for the first time and tag sales galore, it has been an all-over very positive experience.

Being able to take part in your communities has been an honor, and as I look back on this year of adventures, I wonder what other adventures are in store for me.

After all, South Hadley is truly a town of community, and there is always something interesting hiding on those twisting back roads to explore and write about.

Thank you for a wonderful 2024, and I'll see you in 2025.

Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

## Town honors retiring District 1 Fire

By Nick Boonstra  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Fire District 1 Chief Robert Authier was recognized in honor of his retirement after over three decades in the fire service.

Authier joined Fire District 1 as Chief in January 2011, after having served as Deputy Chief for Holyoke Fire from 2005. He began his career as a firefighter in 1991.

Interim District 1 Fire Chief Tom Stark remarked that Au-

thier had made a significant impact in South Hadley and beyond, and was stepping forward into a well-deserved next chapter of his life. "We're certainly going to miss him," Stark said.

State Senator Jake Oliveira of the Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester District presented Authier with a citation from the Massachusetts Senate, and thanked him for his lengthy service to the public.

"These are often thankless

Please see **CHIEF**, page 2



District 1 Fire Chief Robert Authier, left, accepts a plaque from incoming interim Fire Chief Tom Stark.

Photo by Paula Ouimette

FEBRUARY

Access, affordable housing embroil Planning Board

By Nick Boonstra Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY — Members of the community have been taking opportunities in the last week to voice their discontent that Planning Board meetings are only available virtually, with two such residents sharing their thoughts at the board's regular meeting on Monday, Feb. 26.

Several questions regarding the potential for a hybrid option were raised at the Meet the Candidates forum put on by Know Your Town at the library on Thursday, Feb. 22, many of them directed at Robert Watchilla, who is running for a seat on the board.

Aside from these comments from the public, a significant portion of the board's Feb. 26 meeting was devoted to furthering the

discussion around changes to the town's Flexible Development bylaw, which has also been a topic for consideration at previous meetings.

The intent of the bylaw is to provide a mechanism to encourage developers to preserve open space in the town by allowing for denser residential developments than might have otherwise been allowed in the underlying zoning district, partially through the granting of "density bonuses."

Planning Director Anne Capra explained that the goal of any changes to the bylaw would be to simplify its application process, which has been sparsely used over the course of its existence.

Board Vice Chair Nate Therien acknowledged the complicated nature of the issue of afford-



The Planning Board met on the evening of Monday February 26.

able housing but pushed back on the notion that the Flexible Development bylaw, and the proposed changes to it, were in opposition to the town's affordable housing goals.

There are ways to combine development enterprise and the search for an income on property with public interest that takes the form of money, like higher tax-

es for example, or government grants," Therien said. "We need to think about zoning that might attract the kind of housing that would be more affordable, and also answer other needs, say for more housing options."

Planning Director Capra also spoke to the capacity of the Flexible Development bylaw to encourage sensible affordable

housing in town.

The Planning Board declined to vote for or against any amendments to the Flexible Development bylaw on the night, opting instead to allow for more time to review and revise the proposed changes and to revisit the bylaw at the board's next regular meeting on March 11.



A contingent of residents are raising money to rename Plains School in memory of Hank Skala, the late principal, who passed away almost two years ago. Photo courtesy of Plains School

2024 Year in Review

Funds being raised to rename Plains School

By Tina Lesniak Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY — As of Wednesday, Jan. 31, supporters of renaming Plains School in memory of Hank Skala have raised almost two-thirds of the money needed to do so.

The late principal passed away almost two years ago, leaving a legacy of love, kindness, and support for his teachers, the community, and, most of all, his students.

"Hank was truly one of a kind. He was genuine, compassionate and kind-hearted," recalled Ashley Macey, a first-grade teacher at Plains. "He truly cared about his staff members and more importantly cared for the kids. Hank always wanted what was best for Plains School and everyone involved."

Shortly after Skala's passing, Danielle Cooke, a member of the South Hadley School Committee began thinking about a way to honor him. She remembered that the middle school had been renamed for a similar reason when she was a student there and wondered if that might be a possibility.

The plan hit a bit of a roadblock when Cooke found out that the school committee and town had conflicting policies, with the school committee's saying it just needed to vote on the change and the town saying it needed a petition, a vote by the selectboard and, if the building is more than 25 years old, a town meeting vote.

"Because of the conflicting policies, town administration wanted to review with legal counsel, but let me know I could con-

tact the family in the meantime for their blessing," explained Cooke.

Finally, in November 2022, town council decided that because the building had changed addresses when the new building opened in 2015 and because the school committee had a preexisting policy only a school committee vote would be needed. The school committee voted for the change on Nov. 17, 2022, and sought out quotes to change the signage.

The school committee approved the fundraising project at its Jan. 18 meeting for \$7,500 in expected materials and labor for the project. Cooke, and Plains School PTA President Megan Bartlett who started the GoFundMe, are hopeful that the funds will be raised rather quickly.



Town Administrator Lisa Wong presented Fire Chief Robert Authier with a certificate from the town.

Photo by Paula Ouimette

CHIEF from page 1

jobs," Oliveira said. "Whether you're a firefighter, whether you're a police officer, whether you're an EMT, whether you're a schoolteacher — you are the essential functions of government."

Hadley Fire Chief Mike Spanknebel spoke on behalf of the Hampshire County Fire Chiefs, highlighting Authier's record of consistently serving not only South Hadley itself, but the surrounding communities as well.

"You always answered the phone," said Spanknebel, who also presented Authier with a congratulatory certificate.

East Longmeadow Fire Chief Paul Morrisette gifted Authier a bugle on behalf of

the Western Massachusetts Fire Chiefs Association, a traditional token of gratitude for retiring chiefs with over five years of service to the region.

He also made clear that any impact he may have had on the District was mirrored in the team's impact on him. "As chief, you parent them as your kids," he said of the department, a statement illustrating his prioritization of the growth of his team during his tenure.

District 1 Prudential Committee Chair Bruce Perron said that Authier had been responsible for not only growing the local squad, but also helping a number of chiefs that have come up across the region.

"He's built a base," Perron said, adding, "that base is represented today" around the region. "It's an accolade to his teaching ability."

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FEBRUARY

2024 Year in Review



The chamber donated \$4,016 to Neighbors Helping Neighbors on Nov. 14, 2023.

Chamber of Commerce impacts community as a whole

By Dalton Zbierski Editor

SOUTH HADLEY/GRANBY – Representing multiple communities, the South Hadley & Granby Chamber of Commerce exists to promote and grow the business of its members.

The chamber was launched in South Hadley in 1959 and grew to include Granby due to the geographical proximity of the two towns. Today, the chamber continues to impact local business, including nonprofits and the community as a whole.

Chamber President Regina Zebrowski, a sales and design executive with Chap de Laine’s Interiors, reflected on recent chamber events that aligned with its mission.

“Last November, we held our Celebrity Bartender event, and in December we held our 35th Annual Holiday Stroll as well as our Chamber Holiday party to benefit Toys for Tots. The bartender event raised enough proceeds so that we could present Neighbors Helping Neighbors with a check in excess of \$4,000,” Zebrowski said.

Throughout the year, the chamber facilitates Business After 5 events, which are held at a local member venue with an event sponsor and a nonprofit.

“Members attend the event to network

and socialize with a fundraiser taking place with proceeds being donated to the nonprofit. The events are well attended by members who look forward to connecting with each other,” Zebrowski said.

The chamber does not rely on grants as part of its daily operations and instead funds its annual budget through the events it holds throughout the year. Major events like each edition of Business After 5 allow the chamber to make regular donations to nonprofits and senior centers and award annual scholarships.

When asked what the benefits of joining the chamber are, Zebrowski said there are many.

They include an invitation to networking and business education events with other local businesses, being listed on the chamber website membership directory and having the opportunity for ribbon cutting ceremonies and promotion.

“(More benefits are) having the opportunity to be a member of a growing and thriving business community that positively supports each other as well as the local community through the chamber’s major events and the opportunity to participate on the chamber’s Board of Directors and/or committees,” Zebrowski said.



Candidates for South Hadley’s upcoming election met with the public on Feb. 22.

Meet the candidates forum connects town to government

By Nick Boonstra Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY — Know Your Town held its annual Meet the Candidates forum at the South Hadley Public Library on Thursday, Feb. 22, an event that offered community members an opportunity to engage with and voice their feelings about their local government.

Town residents and elected officials gathered in the Community Room of the library to meet candidates for town wide as well as district seats that will be on the ballot in the town’s elections on March 5. Most of the candidates present were running in uncompetitive elections, though the townwide Trustee Free Public Library race will have four candidates for three seats.

Among the candidates for townwide

office present at the forum were John Hine, running for Town Moderator; Jeffrey Cyr and Carol Constant, running for Selectboard; Ronald Coutu, running for Municipal Light Board; Evelyn Masson, running for Board of Assessors; Mitchell Resnick, Lanette Sweeney and Neil Broome, running for Trustee Free Public Library; and Robert Watchilla, running for Planning Board.

District-specific candidates present included Hine, also running for District 1 Moderator; Pauline McClaffin, running for District 1 Water Commissioner; Mitchel Malinowski, running for District 1 Prudential Committee; and Carlene Hamlin, running for District 2 Moderator.

Members of the public had the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.

SHPD chief office hours

SOUTH HADLEY—The South Hadley Chief of police office hours for the month of January.

Thursday, Jan. 9 - 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the South Hadley Senior Center

Thursday, Jan. 23 - 5 - 6:30 p.m. at the South Hadley Center

Wednesday, Jan. 29 - 12 noon -2 p.m. at Neighbors Helping Neighbors

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Routes 202/33 Corridor Zoning Amendments

COMMUNITY FORUM #4

04

JANUARY 16TH, 2025

Thursday

6:00 - 8:00 pm

South Hadley Public Library, 2 Canal Street

Be part of the conversation as we introduce the draft Design Guidelines and Zoning Recommendations for the Corridor.

Your input is KEY to shaping the plans for the Community!

Join us to share your opinions on the future proposed zoning of Routes 202 and 33 in South Hadley!

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January 15, 2021

Police receive awards for excellence



On Jan. 12, 2021 the Richard G. Werenski Police Officer of the Year Award was given to Sgt. Mark Baran of the South Hadley Police Dept., who is pictured here between Sgt. Chad Alexander and Det. Eric Alexander of the Easthampton Police Dept.

# Opinion



## Can my wife claim her SS now and get half my SS benefit later?

### Dear Rusty:

My wife will reach her full Social Security benefit at 66.5 years of age which is just under 2 years away for her now.

If she were to begin to get her monthly check now (i.e. early), would that prevent her from being eligible for the spousal benefit to receive half of what I am currently drawing?

Signed: Curious Husband

### Dear Curious:

If your wife claims her own SS retirement benefit now (e.g., at 64.5 years) and you are already collecting your own SS benefit, then she will be automatically deemed to be filing for her spousal benefit immediately when she claims her own benefit. She does not have the option to defer claiming her spousal benefit until later.

This is a change made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which requires all those first claiming SS to file for all benefits they are eligible for when they claim. What that would mean is that your wife's benefit now, including her spousal boost from you, would be actuarially reduced by the number of months early she claimed.

Her own SS retirement benefit would be permanently reduced by about 15% and her "spousal boost," the additional amount she would get as your spouse, would be reduced by about 19%, yielding a combined benefit which is roughly 42% of your Full Retirement Age SS benefit.

The only way your wife can get half 50% of your FRA benefit entitlement is by waiting until her own full retirement age (66 years and 10 months) to claim. Note too that your wife's spousal benefit will be based on your FRA entitlement, so if you claimed earlier or later than your own full retirement age, her spousal benefit will still be based on your FRA entitlement.

Also, your wife should be aware that anyone, who claims early, is subject to Social Security's "earnings test," which limits how much can be earned while collecting early benefits. Thus, if your wife is working, she will be restricted on how much she can earn before Social Security takes away some of her benefits.

FYI, the earnings limit changes annually, but for 2025 it is \$23,420 and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit. And, FYI, the earnings limit goes up a lot during the year FRA is attained and the earnings test no longer applies once full retirement age is reached.

I hope this answers your question, but if you have need additional information, please feel free to contact us directly at SSAdvisor@amac-foundation.org, or call us at 1-888-750-2622.

*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 [amac-foundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amac-foundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*



## A New Year of possibilities

I spent last night curled up on the couch with a seed catalog in hand. It was a nostalgic few hours for me, in which I was transported back decades, to when gardening was new and my time and energy were boundless.

Regardless of it being the present day, I began circling this and that, and even curled a few pages too. All the fruit and vegetables I could grow, and store, and preserve, and eat, all year long.

Could my homesteading nature be bubbling back up to the surface? Perhaps. And wouldn't that wonderful if it could be a reality? It surely would.

Talk about an admirable ambition for the New Year.

I started to think about what my family eats on a regular basis and what I would have to do to grow enough food to last throughout the year or at least seriously supplement what we typically buy. The most important considerations are taste and productivity.

If a variety is productive, but doesn't taste great, then what is the point?

I have "plugged" Fedco Seeds a number of times through the years. The newsprint catalog is full of such great information; follow up by looking online ([fedcoseeds.com](http://fedcoseeds.com)) to get a color picture of what you will grow. I specifically enjoy reading the personal recommendations from the trialers in many of the descriptions!

The biggest problem I have growing tomatoes is with early blight. Last night I found a great disease resistant paste tomato called Plum Regal that will suit my needs well, hopefully yielding many quarts of sauce for the cupboards.

And what about that Little Dipper Butternut Squash? Disease resistance reigns true here, with taste and productivity rank-

ing high too. Twenty-two fruits from three plants? I'll take it.

Succession planting is paramount if I want to grow lots of food consistently. This planting method is defined as "planting more than once."

It can be planting lettuce, for example, every two weeks throughout the growing season or planting beets in the spot the peas vacated. Reading the catalog reminded me that not every variety is suited for succession sowing.

In other words, the lettuce I sow for an early spring sowing might not be best for planting in the summer, and summer lettuce definitely won't be the best to extend my growing from fall into winter. I will definitely plan accordingly.

Likewise, I may love "Jade" green beans, but they wouldn't be the best for my first sowing because they are white seeded and typically white seeded beans rot in cool soil. I'll start with a dark seeded bean.

I am really looking forward to trying to grow a few new things this year, watermelon and cantaloupe to be exact. Less fruit to buy is a good thing, right?

I learned some tips from the catalog. Namely, to start the melons indoors, then transplant at two or three weeks old, before the roots tangle, into soil that has been amended with lots of aged manure or compost and prewarmed with black plastic mulch.

Using row covers over the plants until flowers appear will keep off the cucumber beetles and provide additional heat. The catalog also provided some interesting tips on how to harvest ripe melons.

When I did manage to grow a plant to maturity, there is absolutely nothing worse than cutting into a melon notoriously unripe with no way to ripen it. Best to call it chicken food at that point.

So this year I will grow ripe melons, lots of lettuce and butternut squash along with gallons of tomato sauce. And more. A New Year of possibilities.

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

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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.

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This newspaper will print free self-submitted statements of candidacy only four weeks or more out from the election. All candidates running in both contested and uncontested races are asked to submit their statements to the editor to include only biographical and campaign platform details. Total word count for statements is limited to between 300-500 words maximum. Please include a photo. We will not publish any state-

ments 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.

**MARCH**

# 2024 Year in Review



Friends of the South Hadley Seniors hold up the check for \$20,913 to benefit the seniors of South Hadley shown are (left to right) Kim Prough, Lisa Wong, Janet Stawasz, Kathy Gallivan, Dottie Kelly, Rita Starzyk, Carol Constant and Chuck Romboletti.

## The Friends of the South Hadley Outreach Grows

SOUTH HADLEY – Last year, the Friends of the South Hadley Seniors supported nearly \$21,000 of senior related outreach in town.

Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in 1981, the Friends have included in their mission, “to work with the community to benefit South Hadley senior residents”. The Friends take this to heart through their support of the Senior Center, various community organizations and the Friends’ own programming.

“While the majority of our funding goes to the Senior Center, we’re growing our community outreach by helping to support additional groups which benefit seniors such as the Age & Dementia Friendly Initiative, TRIAD and the new Village to Village program. There is a lot of need and we welcome opportunities to help fund initiatives that benefit our senior community,” commented Kim Prough, President of the

Friends of the South Hadley Seniors.

A large portion of their outreach goes to supporting classes, entertainment and other needs at the Senior Center.

The Friends also host their own outreach which includes a variety of free events such as the annual ice cream sundae social with music at McCray’s Farm... and more.

All of these programs are free for seniors thanks to the support they receive from their membership program and fundraisers such as their hanging flower basket sale and Handbag Bingo.

The Friends are run by a volunteer board of directors and rely on additional volunteers to help facilitate their outreach and fundraising efforts.

The Friends welcome new members and volunteers. Friends membership is not limited to seniors. It is open to all who are sympathetic to their mission.

## Re-accreditation assessment of SHPD

*Assessment to take place Jan. 14-16*

SOUTH HADLEY — South Hadley Police Department is scheduled for a Re-Accreditation assessment by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission over a three (3) day period January 14, 15, and 16, 2025, after the South Hadley Police Department was initially awarded Accreditation in 2022. The South Hadley Police Department is one of only seven (7) accredited municipal police departments in Western Massachusetts.

The following team of assessors are assigned to conduct the assessment on behalf of the Commission and will be arriving on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025:

Lieutenant Larry Bateman of the Sturbridge Police Dept, Sergeant Josiah Morrisette of the Uxbridge Police Dept. and Sergeant Jarad La Valle of the Belchertown Police Dept. Captain Victor Neal (Retired Westford Police Dept.) will be facilitating the assessment on behalf of the Commission.

During this on-site assessment, the as-

sessors will be examining our policies, facility, equipment and adherence to policies and best practices as set forth by the Commission. We must be able to demonstrate to the assessors that we are in compliance with the Commission’s mandatory standards as well as a percentage of the optional standards for our size agency.

As part of the assessment process, please be advised that you are invited to offer comments to the Commission about the Department as they pertain to accreditation standards. You may speak with the assessors directly during the visit or you may send written comments to the Commission prior to the assessment at the following address: Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission, 110 Haverhill Road Suite 3, 97 Amesby, MA 01913. If you would like to review the standards for state accreditation or if you have any questions about the upcoming Re-Accreditation assessment, please contact, Sgt. Barry T. O’Connor our Accreditation Manager at oconnorb@southhadleypolice.org or 413-538-8231.

The assessment will conclude on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025 with a briefing with the assessors.

to racial and DEIB issues. She also expressed her hope that an outcome of these trainings would be “to gain a common language and understanding between staff, boards and committee members” around the subject of DEIB.

Wong said she would like to see these trainings impact not only department heads, but all members of the town government and the entire community, and hoped that it would ultimately help shape the town’s next Master Plan Implementation Forum later this year.

**SELECTBOARD** from page 1

implementation of a points system for objectively determining salaries.

The meeting also addressed a draft request for quotes from vendors to put together a comprehensive series of trainings for town department heads and board members on the subject of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Wong said that these trainings were being created pursuant to a number of goals in the town’s Master Plan relating

## Superintendent and Assistant Supt. decline salary increases

By Nick Boonstra  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Superintendent Mark McLaughlin stated during the School Committee’s March 7 meeting that he and Assistant Superintendent Jenn Voyik would not accept increases to their salaries in the upcoming budget.

The announcement came as McLaughlin and Voyik laid out the highlights of their proposed budget for the coming school year. Among the proposals was a cut of four teaching staff, a move that the superintendents argued would still allow the district to maintain class-size ratios on par with the state’s target figures even when considering the potential for an influx of students moving into the district or coming in via school choice.

Among these increases were contracted increases for both regular and special education transportation, as well as the shifting of \$700,000 of teacher salaries from school choice funds to the local budget.

“We really cannot any longer rely on school choice to fund staff,” McLaughlin said. “We’re trying to demonstrate that every penny counts, and also that we are trying to be part of the solution,” he said.

However, he also called attention

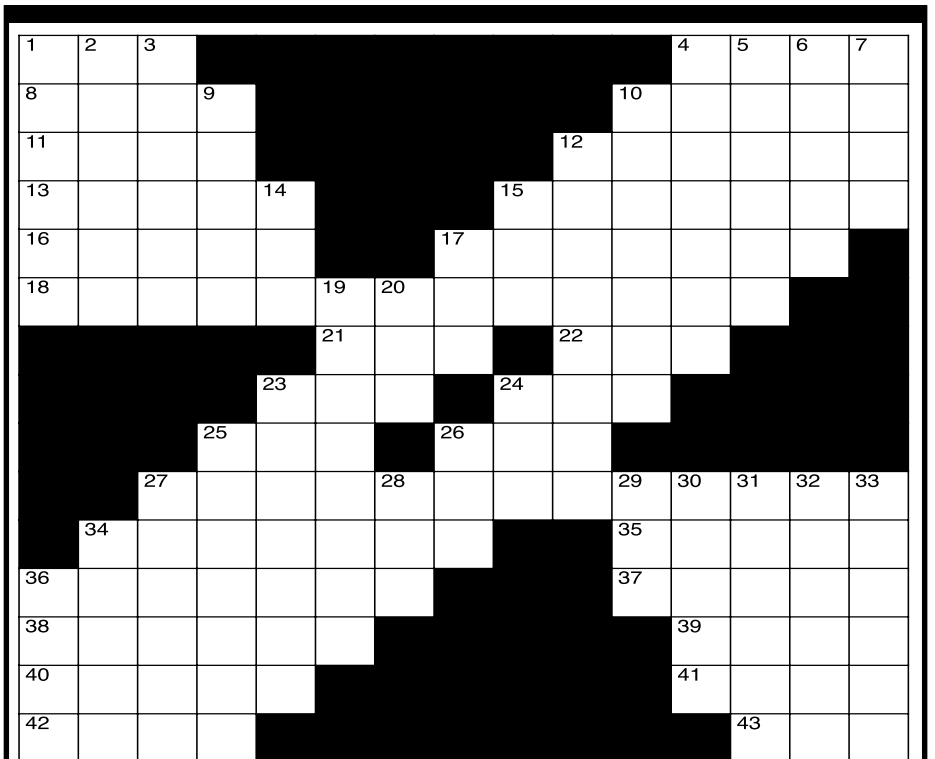
to the heavy workload that the members of the district’s administrative staff have taken on, cautioning the board that future candidates for superintendent may not be eager to assume the current breadth of duties of the role at the salary being offered by the town.

Importantly, McLaughlin clarified that this reduction in teaching staff would not significantly harm the student-teacher ratios across the district, which he and Voyik said were already superior to those expected by the Commonwealth.

There was also a proposal for the addition of one teacher of the deaf in the district, which the superintendents explained would result in a net savings to the town when considering the financial offset such a teacher would enable in bringing out-of-district students back to town and reducing the need for expensive contractors.

In addition to the proposed teacher cuts, a reduction of 23.2 full-time equivalents of paraeducators was also suggested.

Committee Chairperson Eric Friesner expressed his understanding of these suggestions, but made a point to remember that conversations such as these ultimately involved individuals and their jobs, and that they were not taken lightly.



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Americans’ “uncle”
- 4. Chair
- 8. Ancient kingdom
- 10. Egyptian city
- 11. Alaskan glacier
- 12. One from Somalia
- 13. Ancient alphabets
- 15. Relating to vocabulary
- 16. Small mongrels
- 17. Natural settings
- 18. Weekend entertainments
- 21. Line from which light seemingly streams
- 22. Your own private code
- 23. Swiss river
- 24. Satisfaction
- 25. A person’s brother or sister
- 26. Folk singer DiFranco
- 27. The Blonde Bombshell
- 34. Kids’ school project
- 35. Bluish greens
- 36. Classifying
- 37. Cube-shaped
- 38. Choo-choos
- 39. Indian religious god of dissolution
- 40. French department
- 41. Leak into gradually
- 42. Foundation

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Counterbalancing debt
- 2. In slow tempo
- 3. Glamorous city
- 4. Japanese lute
- 5. Makes law
- 6. Informative book
- 7. Animal’s body part
- 9. American playwright
- 10. Blood poisoning
- 12. Angels
- 14. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 15. Written account
- 17. Unwelcome pest
- 19. Saddle horses
- 20. Type of gibbon
- 23. Delta is one
- 24. NE Massachusetts cape
- 25. Soup cracker
- 26. Yes vote
- 27. Muddy ground
- 28. Physics apparatus (abbr.)
- 29. Type of drug
- 30. German city
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Martini ingredients
- 33. Get away
- 34. Spanish municipality
- 36. Thrust a knife into

APRIL

## 2024 Year in Review

## Rep. Aaron Saunders speaks about need for Quabbin bill

By Nick Boonstra  
Staff Writer

BELCHERTOWN – State Rep. Aaron Saunders (D-Belchertown) spoke at a meeting of the Friends of Quabbin on April 7, to promote a bill that aims to improve regional equity for the communities that host the Quabbin Reservoir.

House Bill 897, also known as An Act Relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity, would create a trust fund to benefit Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Communities, which would be funded by a fee based on the amount of water used by supplied municipalities.

The fee proposed by the bill would be set at five cents per 1,000 gallons drawn and would be expected to raise \$3.5 million for the fund, according to a summary document for the bill provided by Saunders.

The bill also proposes to adjust how

communities would be paid from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, basing payments on total state land acreage as opposed to acreage above the high-water mark as is currently mandated.

Additionally, the bill would ensure that three members on the MWRA Board of Directors were residents of Connecticut River Basin communities.

Saunders went on to detail how many of the towns that contain the reservoir are left to rely primarily on property taxes over commercial development for raising municipal revenues, leading to both buildings and services that were beginning to

degrade as a result of those lower figures. He said that this state of affairs was directly a result of the fact that these communities host the reservoir for other parts of the state.

“The lands that we protect for the Quabbin have foreclosed the ability for these communities to do anything else



State Rep.  
Aaron Saunders



A view of the Quabbin Reservoir from atop Winsor Dam.

that may generate the type of revenue that funds public safety, that funds basic services that we expect from our communities,” Saunders said.

“The water provides such innumerable value to the people and the businesses and the communities of eastern Mass that there ought to be some consideration given to the communities that steward this resource,” Saunders said.

Saunders also said this proposed bill

was coming at a time when the burden placed on the Quabbin Reservoir may soon be increasing.

“There are a great number of communities in the eastern part of the state who are dealing with very serious water quality issues,” Saunders said. “These are communities that need a reliable source of water, and they are looking to us to provide that.”

## A Purple Heart Town sign dedicated in honor of Vietnam veterans

By Nick Boonstra  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Local veterans gathered at the Public Library on March 28 to remember those who served the U.S. in Vietnam, both living and deceased.

South Hadley American Legion Post 260 Commander Brian Willette was proud to point out that the day has been observed annually in town since being formalized in 2017, apart from unavoidable disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic.

“For people of my generation, the Vietnam veterans had a very profound effect,” he said. “First of all, as a little kid, I wanted to be you. I idolized your service.”

But above all of this, they taught Willette and the whole country how to welcome soldiers home. “More importantly, it’s what they did after that service,” said Willette. “Welcoming home our generation from war.”

Included as part of the ceremony was the dedication of two new Purple Heart Town signs, with one each being set aside



Veterans and members of the community gathered to remember those who served in Vietnam at the South Hadley Public Library on March 28.

for South Hadley and Granby to replace previous signs that had been damaged or went missing. South Hadley’s sign honors

town native Corporal Robert J. “Bobby” Sowinski, killed in action in Vietnam in 1968, while Granby’s sign is dedicated to

Lenny Desrochers, who was wounded in action in Vietnam.

State Sen. Jake Oliveira also had the opportunity to speak at the event. “It’s an honor to be here today just to pay tribute to those who served in Vietnam,” he said.

“We call attention to a war that some had a storied past with, and my generation learned from significantly,” Oliveira said. “I think what my generation learned from the Vietnam generation is that, you can disagree with the politics of the war while still supporting the troops.”

Time was also set aside during the event to recognize Mike Slater, a veteran who has served as the town’s Director of Veterans Services in recent years but who will be moving on to a new position serving veterans across the region.

“He’s really made a difference in this town,” Willette said of Slater. “He’s connected so many dots in the community.”

The event closed in a spirit of camaraderie and patriotism as those present joined their voices for a chorus of “God Bless America”.

## South Hadley Players debuts season with Mary Poppins

By Tina Lesniak  
Correspondent



Avery and Michele Kostek rehearsed for the show.

SOUTH HADLEY – In its debut season, South Hadley Players will stage “Mary Poppins” as its very first production the weekend of April 12 to 14.

“It includes both children and adults and the whole family can get involved together. The cast is fabulous! Very talented and dedicated,” said Cynthia Strycharz, director of the show.

Based on the Mary Poppins children’s books and the 1964 Disney film, the musical tells the story of nanny Mary Poppins and her charges Jane and Michael Banks as they go on adventures and try to improve the disposition of the parents.

In the titular role of Mary Poppins will be Tara McKenna. Starring as Bert, the chimney sweep, is Sam Hicks, who many in the area watched grow up on the Eddie’s Furniture commercials. This is Hicks’s first lead role after roles with the

Exit 7 Players and Opera House Players.

Just off her role in Michael E. Smith Middle School’s “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”, South Hadley seventh-grader Lily O’Connor plays the role of Jane Banks.

“I am most excited to be in the first South Hadley Players show and I hope I can keep doing it for years to come,” said O’Connor. “I hope everyone enjoys the show!”

Castmate Zoe Ferguson, a member of the kids ensemble agrees, saying “It’s fun to be in the play with my friends and my dad. My favorite part is singing Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.”

In its first-ever season, South Hadley Players is hoping to connect people who love community theater.

“South Hadley Players is a brand new theater group that has been reborn from a long history of community theater in South Hadley,” explained Strycharz.

Back in 1983, Strycharz formed South

Hadley Community Theatre in memory of her brother Jon Sibley, who died young in a car accident. Sibley had been an actor and alumni of South Hadley High School “who loved to perform, make people laugh and believed in the magic of theater,” recalled Strycharz.

That theater group became very successful, putting on a range of shows including “Bye Bye Birdie”, “Fiddler on the Roof”, “Sound of Music” and “Grease”. The group changed its name to Black Cat Theater and also put on many shows until it ceased operations last year.

When that happened, Strycharz decided to once again honor her brother’s memory by forming another community theater group, with the support of the South Hadley community and businesses.

“We have great support from community businesses and individuals who are reaching out to help us pay the rights for this show. Musical theater is expensive,” said Strycharz.

**MAY** **2024** Year in Review



Ann Andras (left) alongside Lisa Napiorkowski (right) in their favorite nook of the senior center, which is the fireplace.

## COA says goodbye to longtime personnel

By Samuel Gelinas  
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – COA employees Ann Andras and Lisa Napiorkowski anticipate the last days of their careers this week. To recognize their work, a small reception will take place with cake to commemorate their careers on Wednesday, May 15, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the South Hadley Council on Aging (COA).

Napiorkowski has worked as Assistant Director of the senior center since 2008. She calls the day she was accepted for the position as a, “lucky day,” and that she sees now as the perfect time to go.

Andras also has a long history with the center, working her first position there beginning in 1999 as activity coordinator, and would later be promoted to assistant director. From the years of 2008 through 2013 she took a hiatus to work as Director of the Granby Senior Center.

She would then return to South Hadley to accept her dream position, the one she is now retiring from. That is, the job of Social Services Coordinator.

“That’s what I wanted all along...this was my niche, this was my passion you could call it,” she shared as she communicated her enthusiasm for the position.

Neither Napiorkowski nor Andras is afraid of retirement, but have plans, goals, and ambitions to use their time well.

Both talked about the amazing character which has been displayed by colleagues in the COA, both past and present. Napiorkowski referred to Andras as a mentor of hers, and she praised the amazing work environment the center has been able to maintain.

Both praised the willingness and dedication of their coworkers to serve the senior community. “It’s a staff that is willing to say let’s put our stuff down and go out there for an hour,” shared Andras.

## School Committee appoints new member

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Selectboard and School Committee worked together to interview and hear from a candidate for joining the School Committee.

Dr. Jackson Matos, a former School Committee member on a social justice platform, came to the board with an application to join the School Committee once more.

“I love when the schools are producing something, whether sports or arts, and how the community comes to support that,” Matos said.

“I know that representation matters, and as a person of color and member of the queer community, I wanted to bring that representation, and my expertise, to the school committee.”

Both the Selectboard and School Committee voted to accept and approve of Matos’ application, and welcomed them as a new member.

The Selectboard and School Committee then held a time to interview many different applicants for positions on the upcoming committee for the Mosier Elementary School Building.

The boards moved to then consider and vote for all those who applied, and they filled two staff members, two parent members, and three candidates for the construction and architecture experience members.

The boards moved to approve of and appoint both Brook Beaulieu and Elizabeth Wood for the staff positions, and for parent positions, appointed Teresa Winter and Brian Kennedy.

The boards then moved and appointed Diane Mulvaney, Ryan Moore, and Rudi Hall for seats as construction and architecture experience seats.

These positions begin at the end of April 30, 2024, and will end at the completion of the project.

## South Hadley warming shelters

SOUTH HADLEY— The following are the locations for the South Hadley warming shelters.

- **South Hadley Fire District #1**  
144 Newton St, South Hadley
- **South Hadley Fire District #2**  
20 Woodbridge St, South Hadley
- **South Hadley Public Library**  
2 Canal St, South Hadley  
Monday through Wednesday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Thursday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Saturday - 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **South Hadley Senior Center**  
Monday, Wednesday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Tuesday - 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.



The Calkins family, featuring Chief Todd Calkin with his daughter Alicia, wife Lisa and son Corey

## Fire chief retires after 37 year career, thanks his supportive community

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The District No. 2 Fire Department celebrated Todd Calkins in his retirement as fire chief last week, and the town came together to show their appreciation and support for him.

“I served for District 2 for 37 years starting in 1987 as a call firefighter. In 1991, I started full time with the District 3 Water Department,” Calkins explained of his services.

“In 2017, I started full-time on the Fire Department as an assistant chief, and then I became Fire Chief in 2020 during the pandemic, and I retired May 21, 2024.”

On May 21, over 75 people came together to the station to congratulate Calkins for his dedication and service.

Town Administrator Lisa Wong, Superintendent of Water Department Jeff Cyr, State Representative Dan Carey, Karla Youngblood from Mt. Holyoke College, and Father Twohig from St. Theresa’s Parish were some of the people in attendance.

“It was a bittersweet day, but to have all my friends and families and coworkers there felt really good,” Calkins said. “I went around the room to see everyone to share how they impacted my career.”

Many people came forward to give speeches commemorating the many years of service that Calkins has given to the community.

“You’ve been working really diligently and hard,” Wong said as she awarded him with a certificate thanking him for 37 years of service. “I am confident that you

Please see **RETIREES**, page 9



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# JUNE 2024 Year in Review

## Students present what they learned for a year-end celebration

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The school committee got to hear from several students from the elementary schools and middle school and discussed end-of-year plans.

Two kindergarteners with their teacher, Mrs. Campos, from Plains came to the meeting to talk about and share with the members what they learned in their math class.

They created their own donut shop “business” where they learned about money and making change, designing their donut shop, and even designed a menu.

A little boy from Plains came to the board to give a PowerPoint presentation he made about endangered animals for his writing class. Another student from Mosier created a slideshow about dog shows, and it included a video of her mother walking her dog, Edgar, at a dog show.

Sixth graders made and organized a fashion show by making vests from paper bags that feature different writing and grammar rules.

Mrs. Flynn from Mosier Elementary School came with friends to talk about The Kids’ Heart Challenge, which was a fundraiser held during gym classes for kids with heart problems.

In total, everyone raised \$4,558 for the fundraiser. “I got chosen because Miss Stratton said I worked really hard

for it, and helped my friends with it,” a little girl said.

Mrs. Flynn also had another friend talk about how much he loves art, and he brought in some examples of art work he has created, including drawings of tigers, dragons, and more.

Another student from Mosier shared his love of music and played the drums for the board on a recording from home.

Students from MESMS also came on with videos of them showing what they have done in science classes, a group showing things from their Family and Consumer Science and Flight and Space.

In the Family and Consumer Science class, the students demonstrated the process of creating cupcake batter from scratch, including a gluten free batter so students can learn baking skills.

As part of Project Lead the Way, some students took a Flight and Space STEM class which taught students how to create model planes that are able to fly.

The Automation and Robotics class showed off their “dragster” race cars out of Legos and a motor. Two students made another machine and programmed it to move food.

A pair of students discussed Advisory and how to manage, solve, and communicate through finding solutions for problems and bullying.

In Spanish class, students learned manners and the curtesy, how to bake and create delicious desserts and snacks, and more.



Fountain #1, a 1845 Hand Pumper that was big enough that it had to be pulled by horses.

## Firehouse Museum opens to the community

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Firehouse Museum opened over the weekend to show to the community unique artifacts from the town’s firefighting history.

“We love all of our artifacts here, but what we love the most is the stories connected to them,” Diane LaRoche of the Historical Society said.

The museum opened in 1975 after the firemen moved out and the station was retired of use. Since then, it has been a hub for all things related to the history of South Hadley.

“They are just things, but each of them is connected to a story in South Hadley History,” LaRoche said of the different

tools, trinkets, utensils, and books within the museum.

The museum also details the South Hadley Canal, with a lift that was, at the time, the most advanced piece of machinery that helped to lift longboats up the Falls.

The Canal is no longer in use, and what remains of it is not far from the museum on North Main Street and holds more history to be dug up and witnessed by all.

The museum is also working on an application to register the building and area around it to become considered a historical district.

The museum is open on the fourth Sundays of every month from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m., so make sure to stop by and learn something new about the town for the next time it is open!

## JULY

## Farmers market gives back to the community

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Farmers Market, which is now run by Jen Krassler, was a very special one, because it accepted both SNAP and WIC, and through the generous sponsoring of several organizations, was able to SNAP-match \$20 a week.

Last year, they were able to give away a total of \$3000 in SNAP-match money, and Krassler is hoping to see even more be awarded this year.

“I’m really excited because I want to see it go to people and families who need it,” Krassler said. “It’s because of these sponsors we can do this, and I am so thankful.

Renewal by Anderson, Eink, and many others were monumental in supporting this goal, and Krassler expressed her gratitude saying, “Without their generosity, this couldn’t have happened.”

The farmers market has a warm and cheery atmosphere, and everywhere you turn, you can see someone selling something delicious and homemade.

“I love the conversations with the customers; so many interesting things happen,” Krassler



Jen Krassler, the director of the markets, and her husband, Jim Krassler, selling delicious vegetables together.

said. “It’s like spending the day with friends.”

During her time managing the farmers market, she has seen so many small businesses and farms thrive and grow, and “watching food sellers be able to go from a table to a truck is so amazing.”

The market has open applications currently, and is open to farms, food sellers, and artists bringing in things they’ve

made or grown themselves. You can email Jen Krassler for more information at farmersmarket-southhadley@gmail.com.

So, make sure to stop by Buttery Brook Park next week, and the week after that, and get some delicious treats, adorable handmade crochet pieces, honey, tea, and more from members of your community.

## Board of health discusses grant opportunity, growth

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Board of Health got together earlier in June to discuss the organization of a grant of \$509,000 to the state, the Public Health Excellence Grant.

The grant, which was awarded to the town of South Hadley, as well as several others across Massachusetts, serves as a boost towards the public health services the town or city offers, and is awarded by the state.

The Public Health Excellence Grant is awarded to the 351 other Health Departments across Massachusetts and are each funded by their municipalities.

“The Public Health Excellence Grants encourage municipalities to work together and share some services, as determined by their health directors,” Jenneke Reynolds said.

The funds are used primarily to fund a part time health inspector as well as a full time public health nurse. The members on this team are working in Chicopee, Holyoke, and Southampton, making up their PHE group, in order to equita-

bly promote health.

“We aim to meet the requirements of inspecting all food establishments regularly so that all diners can expect a healthy experience when buying prepared food,” Reynolds said.

“Our nurse is working on health communication for chronic diseases most affecting our communities, and also is working on increasing vaccine confidence locally,” Reynolds said.

Health Departments are essential to the communities and help to provide many different services in order to ensure that the health and safety of the residents of these municipalities is kept at the highest importance.

“Health Departments are involved with so many aspects of our community’s health, and we are working to increase the capacity of our health departments to improve health outcomes,” Reynolds said.

The Public Health Excellence Grant, then, ensures that communities across Massachusetts have access to health services, and empowers towns to be able to provide this care to their residents.





**JULY**

# Buttery Brook hosts a Big Rigs event for all

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Big Rig Day has been a staple event to the community since it was started by the Plains School and SHEL D before moving to Buttery Brook Park in 2009.

The event featured fire trucks from Districts 1 and 2, Water Department 1, the Police Department, DPW, 911 Trailer, Interstate Towing, 413 Dumpster, Hampshire Towing, Carleton Lawngistics, and Marion Excavating.

Also in attendance to contribute to the event were the Board of Health, Happy Face Painter for face painting, Texas Roadhouse, and the Children’s Advocacy Center of Hampshire County.

“Big Rig Day has become one of my favorite days of the year,” Andy Rogers, South Hadley’s Human Services Director said. “To see so many happy kids enjoying all of the vehicles is so exciting! Thanks to everyone who contributes to the event.”

Kids got the opportunity to climb inside the trucks, honk the horns, and sit in the drivers seats with junior firefighter hats and po-



Siblings Aniebella and Jae’ceon controlling the Water District bulldozer.

lice badges, and All Star Dairy donated a freezer and ice cream sandwiches for all to enjoy, and SHEL D passed them out.

The Friends are raising money in order to fill a \$300,000 gap in the funds needed to finish improvements on the park and its trails and equipment, and have so far raised \$35,000 and more to come..

“Buttery Brook Park is about to undertake a massive park renovation project which includes accessible trails and walkways, new playground pieces, new disc golf

course, new band stage, new pickleball courts, and more,” Prough said.

South Hadley received a PARC Grant as well as funding from the town towards the project, resulting in a total of \$715,000 of funding towards the \$1million budget.

“There is so much to love about Buttery Brook Park, which is an incredible asset to the community of South Hadley,” Prough said. “We’re excited to bring more improvements to the park and we’re grateful for the public and private support from our fundraising campaign.”

**AUGUST**

# Local church hosts free line dancing lessons

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Second Baptist Church hosts special, free, line dancing lessons hosted by Jennifer Jones on Tuesday nights.

Jones, with her group, Line Dancing: Good for the Sole, has been going since 2018, and Jones has been dancing since 2012.

She became inspired to begin choreographing her own songs after listening to some songs on the radio, and the rest is history as she began to use her church’s gymnasium for the dance classes.

Anyone can come and dance, and knowing how to line dance is not required. The first half hour, 5:00 to 5:30 p.m., is dedicated to “ultra beginners”, and after that goes live for other people to join remotely.

“I try to teach them it’s ok to make mistakes, to not be perfect,” Jones said. “I love watching people learn.”

The classes have anywhere from 15 to 50 people dancing in the church’s gymnasium, and Jones provides a donation box for people to choose to add to.

The donations go towards the church, in order to fund its various needs, even being able to help with some additions to the sanctuary.

Famous choreographer John Robinson has also attended several classes done by Jones, and he even took her choreography of the song “From the Day” by I AM THEY to performances all over the world.

There is a song and dance for everyone, from the most experienced to the newest line dancer out there, the lessons are easy to follow, and you are sure to have an amazing time.



The group of fantastic dancers with Jennifer and her husband in the blue shirts.

SEE MORE AUGUST ON PAGE 12.

# SB holds joint meeting, discusses a dangerous dog

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – The Selectboard held a joint meeting with the Appropriations Committee to discuss the plan for a public hearing regarding a dangerous dog.

On June 24, a pit bull escaped from its owner’s yard and attacked and killed a small dog, named Harper, and injured another on Pynchon Road.

Currently, the dog is in quarantine, while the police report and final evidence are being collected, reviewed, and put forward to set a date for the official hearing regarding the dangerous dog.

Chair Andrea Miles allowed community members to come forward to share their thoughts regarding the hearing of the dangerous dog, and then would move into hearing from the police and animal control to discuss the attack that occurred.

Miles moved forward to discuss when to hold the hearing in order to ensure that there is ample time for respective parties to be notified, make information publicly available, and announce the public hearing itself to be notified to the community.

“We offer our sincere condolences to the Wall family for your loss,” Cyr said.

During the hearing, the victim and any attorney or witnesses will be able to speak, including the animal control officer. After that, the dog owner and any attorney or witnesses will also be able to speak on the attack.

The end of the meeting will have the Selectboard discuss and deliberate, and either label the dog as a danger or a nuisance, and it will move forward from there.

By the end of the August meeting, the Selectboard found the dog to be too dangerous, and ordered for it to be humanely euthanized after hearing all of the needed evidence and testimonies from the communities.

**RETIREES** from page 7

have been a really great leader, and you are leaving the town in great hands.”

Calkins welcomed former captain Ryan Moore into the position as chief, and the pair shared a warm handshake as Calkins passed on the mantle to Moore.

“Firefighting is in our family, and I couldn’t wait until the day I turned 18 to be a firefighter,” Calkins said. “I love helping people, and it’s a great way to do that and help the community.”

Calkin’s son, Corey, who is on the Westover Fire Department, marks the fifth generation of Calkins serving as firefighters.

“I would like to thank all of the board members in my career, both in the water commissions and the Prudential Committee, and all the residents for their support for our department,” Calkins said.

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## Tigers win fourth straight over Monson



Julius Hebenth scores a pair for the Tigers.



Jackson Driver gets the easy layup.

MONSON – Prior to the Christmas holiday, South Hadley High School boys basketball made it a perfect 4-0 with a 77-49 win over Monson. South Hadley had its third game in four where it scored more than 70 points on offense. Unfortunately, the Tigers’ winning streak was halted on Dec. 23 as South Hadley’s offense was shut down in a 47-44 defeat against Monument Mountain. The Tigers had a long layoff before returning to action on Saturday, Jan. 4 against Bethlehem Central at 12 noon.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Jack Loughrey shoots on target.



Timothy Loughrey goes for the score under pressure.



Noah Rivera makes his way down the court.

## Rams rebound after tough start

GRANBY – After an 0-2 start, Granby High School girls basketball round out three straight wins to finish the 2024 portion of its schedule. Granby defeated Athol 54-15, Smith Academy 38-34, and last Friday night, defeated Ware 42-26 to go to 3-2 on the season. The Rams face Renaissance Jan. 3 at 7 p.m.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli  
Autumn Sicard looks to make a three-pointer.



Kaitlyn Curran looks to inbound the ball.



Brenna Moreno carefully enters the paint.



Eleanor Szlosek takes the open layup.



Molly Zumbruski takes a pass on the arc.

## Longtime referee wins MIAA award

LUDLOW – Last month, long-time referee Joe Lavoie was recognized as the MIAA Football Official of the Year. According to information provided, Lavoie joined the Western Mass Football Officials Association (WMFOA) in 1974 (51 years) as a junior at AIC in Springfield, MA.



Referee Joe Lavoie

Lavoie was a 3-year starter for Milt Piepul’s 8-1 (’75) AIC Yellowjackets. He was selected All-New England Honorable Mention by the AP

and Boston Herald (’75), and selected to the ECAC team of the week versus Northeastern University.

After college, Lavoie taught and coached football in Ludlow for Steve Marino and subsequently in Agawam for Roger LeClerc, before joining private industry as a computer systems programmer/analyst. Retired from MassMutual with 30-plus years of service.

He was a 1971 graduate of Ludlow High School playing

football for Chick Patullo and baseball for Bill Mullins.

In high school, he was selected All-Suburban League and All-Western-Mass as a tri-captain for Chick Patullo, Jim Cavallo, Dave Dzuira, and Joe Andreis, who instilled the love of football, hard work, and fair play into their teams.

As an official, he was elected president of the WMFOA in 1993, and started and taught a first, second, third-year official’s training class, and game sign-in requirement for new officials to attend pre-games and work the

Please see **AWARD**, page 11



Referee Joe Lavoie (center) officiates with his crew on a rainy Thanksgiving morning at Agawam High School this year.

## Isles outlast T-Birds in 7-5 track meet

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-13-2-1) could not escape a furious push by the Bridgeport Islanders (7-19-2-2) in a high-flying 7-5 contest on Saturday night inside the Mass-Mutual Center.



The Islanders tried to spoil the T-Birds debut for rookie netminder Will Cranley when Liam Foudy opened the scoring on a rebound to the goaltender's right at 7:36.

Springfield would be tested after the Islanders went to a power play at the 13:04 mark, but captain Matthew Peca took matters into his own hands to change the tide. After skating out of his zone with possession, he challenged a forward wide on the left side before surprising Henrik Tikkanen with a short-side snapper to tie the score, 1-1, on Springfield's second short-handed tally of the season. Peca's tally was his team-leading 12th of the campaign and second in as many nights.

Peca was in the middle of things again just 5:04 later, weaving into the offensive end to create a 2-on-1 outnumbered attack. This time, Peca played the role of playmaker, laying a perfect pass to the blade of Matt Luff in the right circle. With no

wasted movement, Luff one-timed it past a sliding Tikkanen, giving Springfield the 2-1 lead with just 1:26 left in the frame. Peca's assist was his 100th as a member of the T-Birds, making him the first player in club history to hit the 100-assist plateau.

The Islanders gave a glimpse of what was to follow in the middle period when Tyce Thompson one-timed a slapper off the post and off Cranley to tie the game, 2-2, at 3:15 of the second period, as the T-Birds were scrambling to get back into position.

The T-Birds' special teams had the next notable moment just 2:09 later, as Marcus Sylvegard beautifully spotted Luff on a pass from the left corner to the top of the crease, allowing the veteran winger a tap-in for his second of the night to restore the Springfield lead, 3-2, at 5:24.

After a rare stretch of scoreless hockey on this evening, the Islanders found their way to a tie score again when Matt Maggio surprised Cranley with a quick wrister from the left circle off a setup from Grant Hutton, evening the game, 3-3, at 14:20.

Before the T-Birds could escape the onslaught, the Islanders got their second lead of the night

at 19:06, when a poor Springfield line change set up a 3-on-2 for Bridgeport. Gemel Smith neatly left a puck for Foudy near the crease, and the veteran winger had an open net for his second of the night and a 4-3 Islanders lead after 40 minutes.

Midway through what had been a quiet third period, the T-Birds power play connected for a second time as Sylvegard deflected an attempt from Aleksanteri Kaskimaki over Tikkanen's shoulder, and the game was tied again, 4-4, at 10:04 of the third.

Despite their scrappiness to get back even, the T-Birds could not salvage a point on this night, and Maggio capped his four-point night with a corner-picking wrister at 16:20, which gave Bridgeport a 5-4 lead. Cole Bardreau added an empty-net tally at 18:45 to push the lead to 6-4.

That Bardreau tally proved pivotal when Hunter Skinner found the net from the right side with 25 seconds to play, trimming the margin back to 6-5. Ultimately, however, the T-Birds ran out of time, and with the clock about to expire, Marc Gatcomb flung a clearing effort into the empty cage to round out the scoring. Cranley finished his T-Birds debut with 35 saves, while Tikkanen escaped with his first win in six tries with 31 stops.

## Railers fall to Thunder in first half home finale

WORCESTER — The Railers lost 7-3 to the Adirondack Thunder on Sunday afternoon to close out the first half of the 2024-25 home schedule.

Worcester went into the second period with the score tied, 1-1. The Railers then allowed four goals in a little less than seven minutes starting at 3:53 and their afternoon was over.

Coach Nick Tuzzolino refused to place the blame for the defeat on Bullion's shoulders when asked if it was his fault.

"I would never say that in that light," Tuzzolino said. "We've got to be good in front of him and could have been better. Could have blocked a couple of those shots. I'm sure he has his own thoughts on those goals but we're a team."

Worcester got two goals from Jordan Kaplan and one from Griffin Loughlan. Anthony Repaci assisted on all three goals. Repaci's historic season continues unabated. He extended his points streak to seven straight games. He is 3-10-13 during the streak.

The game was his 193rd for Worcester, passing Barry Almeida as the all-time franchise leader in that category. The assists give him 90 in a Worcester uniform, tied with Almeida on that list. They

are tied for fourth among all Worcester pro players with Tom Cavanagh of the Sharks next at 92.

The Railers were 2 for 5 on the power play and are among the league leaders in that category. They have at least one power play goal in seven straight games. That ties a team record set in February of 2022.

"That's probably the most frustrating thing," Tuzzolino said. "It's all those little pieces. We just have to find the right piece."

Loughran gave Worcester an early lead at just 2:36 of the first period. Repaci found his linemate all alone at the bottom of the left circle and Loughran made no mistake burying a 15-footer.

It was 1-1 after 20 minutes, then the Railers hit an iceberg.

"I think we got confidence early," Tuzzolino said, "then some of those goals they scored killed our confidence, and confidence is the easiest thing to lose and the hardest to get back."

Ryan Francis was 2-3-5 to pace the Adirondack offense. Josh Filmon, Ryan Wheeler, Alex Young, Grant Loven and Dylan Wendt had the other Thunder goals.

## Coaching classes available

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

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

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2005 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course, and an approved Sports First Aid course.

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

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

Additional requirements for all coaches:

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

All MIAA member school coaches (stipend or volunteer) are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. Rugby Coaches must see Rule 76.2 for additional coaches' education information.

Any questions, please call Donna Harrington at 508-541-9804 or email [dharrington@miaa.net](mailto:dharrington@miaa.net).

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

## AUGUST



## Resident celebrates 100th birthday

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY — Birthdays are a special occasion, and for Dotty Barry, she has reached her one-hundredth year blessing the community with her smile.

"Here's a glimpse of the Dot Barry we all know and love," Carolyn Mongeau said, one of the organizers of the party.

The party featured nineteen of Barry's friends and family on July 24, and an afternoon of fun and joy to celebrate the role model and friend of many in the town at the home of Cecile and Rich Girard.

There were sixteen neighbors who came to celebrate, including the five party committee members who put it all together, Linda Young, Cecile Girard, Carolyn Mongeau, Jackie Burkett, and MaryAnn Wordsworth.

Also in attendance were her daughter and son-in-law, Kate and Joe Gadbois.

Linda Young has known Dotty her whole life, since she and her late husband, Jack, built their house on the same street as her. "Jack was always a kidder, and I loved him," Young said.

Carolyn Mongeau and her husband, Jack, moved in across the street from Dotty in 1999, and "from that date forward, we realized we hit the jackpot with our new neighbors," Mongeau said.

"From the first time I met Dotty and Jack, it seemed they were inseparable," Mongeau said. "Whenever you saw one of them, the other was right by their side. Jack had a true Irish wit that Dotty 'tolerated'."

The party, a surprise for Dot, was put together by her closest friends, who poured all their love and admiration for her into the planning of even the smallest of details.

In order to honor the many years Dot created floral arrangements at Carey's Flowers

in South Hadley, Young had the lemon layered cake with raspberry filling decorated with beautiful hand-painted flowers.

"Dot inspires me every day by her willingness to plug on, to enjoy people, and to live life to the fullest despite all of her setbacks," Young said.

Dotty and her late husband have lived in South Hadley their whole lives. They were married in 1949 and have lived in their home on Mosier Street for seventy-five years.

John "Jack" Barry passed away in May 2020, and was the former Postmaster at the South Hadley Post Office. They have two children, three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Dotty's advice for the people today in her community is simple: "Realize that life can go good, and life can go bad, just realize this and go with it!"

## AWARD from page 10

chains in varsity games. That process is still in effect today. In 1994, amended the training classes to have a separate class for first-year officials and started instructing the second and third-year officials' class, and still in-

struct that class today.

Among his many accomplishments, he officiated numerous MIAA playoff and championship games around the state and at Gillette Stadium. He joined the Western Mass Basketball Officials Association in 1980, was elected board President in 2013, subsequently elected sec-trea-

surer from 2015-2017. He still officiates basketball games.

Lavoie earned a CAGS from Springfield College, an MS in management from RPI Hartford, and an MBA from Western New England College. He has taught business and computer systems courses at HCC for over 25 years.

Lavoie has been married to high school sweetheart, Edna (Robertson) Lavoie, for over 45 years, and has three wonderful sons. Two sons live and work in Boston, and one son lives in Longmeadow and is an attorney in Springfield.



SEPTEMBER

2024 Year in Review

Local Lions Club member offers free eye screenings for kids

By Emily-Rose Pappas Staff Writer

GRANBY – Eye screenings are an important part of early development in order to help determine if a child will need glasses or not.

Steve Markow, a retired optometrist, took the Lion’s Club motto “we serve” to heart, and decided to take his skills into the classrooms to provide free eye screenings for preschool children.

Markow and a group of volunteers from the Lions Club got together to budget ten days to go to six different private preschools across Granby and South Hadley to provide these screenings.

“Between the six facilities, we hope to screen as many as we can, which will be at least three hundred out of the four hundred students,” Markow said.

He was an optometrist for 40 years, and opened a business in 2001, Village Eye Care, and ran it for almost twenty-one years, before selling the practice to a new owner after his retirement.

“My favorite part is just knowing there’s an opportunity to help a child who needs eye care, and how that can change the child’s life forever,” Markow said.

“The reason these screenings are so important is because the area to discern 20/20 vision exists in the span of six months and six years,” Markow explained. “That is the time to get vision correction so the brain can see with 20/20 vision.”

By having these screenings, it can prepare parents and families for the child’s care and ensure they can get the care needed in order to achieve equal vision in both eyes.

Ensuring that a child gets their eyes scanned early is important to their educational futures, as well. If a child doesn’t get the corrections they need, they become bored and don’t engage because they can’t see and may become disruptive in the classroom.

“In school, the child learns mostly through their visual input,” Markow said. “Almost 80% to 90% of learning is done through visuals, and that’s why vision is so important for school-aged kids.

The procedure is simple- in a slightly darkened room, a small device uses light to look at the eyes. No photos are taken, and the light shined on the eye reads how light shines from the machine into the eye, and takes measurements of the eye.

The test screens for several things instantly, including nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, unequal correction between the two eyes (one eye might be nearsighted the other might not be), eye-misalignment/ eye turn, and unequal pupil size.

Because of how important access to eye care is, the Lions Club has some funding, though “its limited, to offset the cost of funding eye exams or glasses for those children who fall between the cracks financially,” Markow said.

Resident invents clip to keep flags waving proud

By Emily-Rose Pappas Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Local South Hadley resident Kim Cook takes pride in her American flag she has in front of her house but discovered a problem: tangling.

“My flag kept getting tangled, and so I looked for a solution online, and there wasn’t one, so I invented one,” Cook said. “A big piece of why I did this is because of the pride we have in our flags.”

She was tired of seeing her flag, and the flags lining the telephone poles and on houses in town, wrapping around their poles because of the wind, causing damage and rips.

She knew she wanted something that could be attached to the flag, wouldn’t look out of place, and could serve anyone with any kind of flag that got irritated when it flipped around the pole.

And so, the “No-Flip Clip” was born, and Cook jumped into researching how to make it possible.

“One of the biggest things when talking with people about their flag flipping, frustration was at the top,” Cook said.

The packaging, a small box with the star on the clip visible, has this slogan: “No more frustration of seeing your flag wrapped around the pole. Attach this clever device to your flag and it will fly freely.”

Over the course of five years, Cook worked to find the right materials and business partners after coming up with her idea: a perfectly weighted clip to put



Kim Cook standing proudly with her invention on her flag.

on the flag itself to keep it from having the wind blow it around the pole.

The clip, in the shape of a star, has a nut and bolt on the inside that gives the product its weight. After getting her idea patented and registered with Easy IP, she went to the ADD FAB Lab on the UMASS Amherst campus for 3D-printing.

“Getting to the end and finding the right one was for sure the best part,” Cook said, describing the process she went through to design the perfect clip.

In the end, she found the perfect fit with Universal Plastics Solutions in Holyoke, and the packaging for the clips was made possible with Tiger Press in East Longmeadow.

The product can be bought online on her website, www.noflipclip.com. She also had her product at the Big E.

Ranger brings stories, fun to kids

By Emily-Rose Pappas Staff Writer

GRANBY – The Granby Public Library hosted the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Hadley to the library with Ranger Tasha Daniels to give a special story.

Daniels, in partnership with the director of the youth services at the library, Janice McArdle, creates a lesson about nature and includes a hands-on craft for them to complete.

This week, the program was on woolly bear caterpillars, a well-known bug that comes out in the fall, and what these fuzzy little creatures turn into- the Isabella Tiger Moth.

Daniels read the book “The Secret Life of the Woolly Bear Caterpillar” by Laurence Pringle and illustrated by Joan Paley to the kids, ages three to five years old and their siblings.

The book follows the travels of a woolly bear caterpillar named Bella and her journey to becoming a beautiful Isabella Tiger Moth.

“I like connecting people to nature through programs at the library,” Daniels

said. “And I love books, and reading. If I didn’t become a ranger, I would work with books.”

The refuge is located in Hadley, is home to all sorts of wildlife and plantlife, but it is different from a park or sanctuary in that it takes care of the animals and plants and insects already on the land, providing education and care for these ecosystems.

“We take care of (the land) and teach the public about it,” Daniels explained. “People are welcome to come and visit and enjoy nature.”

The Refuge has trails to walk on, that are ADA compliant and stroller-friendly, ready to be utilized by anyone that wishes to take a stroll through nature.

The Refuge is always looking for volunteers, and every spring, they look for people to help them remove invasive plants from the refuge lands, pulling up the plants so the natives can grow freely.

The nature story times are a testament to the love the kids have for hearing the talks, listening to “Ranger Tasha”, and enjoying a relaxing morning doing crafts, and listening to a story.

South Hadley Public Schools look forward to the new year

By Emily-Rose Pappas Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – With school kicking off into full swing, the teachers, principals, and staff are welcoming returning, and new students, for the new school year.

“We are committed to fostering a supportive and safe learning environment for all. As we start this new school year, let’s work together to ensure that each student is set up for success,” Principal Elizabeth Wood from the high school said.

“This is going to be a spectacular year, and we look forward to being with you every day,” Assistant Principal David Gallagher at Mosier said.

“It is an honor and privilege to be the Plains Elementary School Principal,”

Carla Lussier said. “I enjoy helping create a positive, effective and safe learning environment for all students, teachers, staff and parents. Go Tiger Cubs!”

South Hadley High School

Richard Meigs, the science teacher at the high school, has been teaching for eight years, and been at South Hadley High School for three, teaching different levels of physics, engineering, and astronomy during those eight years.

“By far, my favorite part of teaching is working with our amazing students in our community,” Meigs said. “Teaching our students, challenging them on a daily basis in a fun, engaging manner, and seeing them succeed always brings me so much joy.”

Please see NEW YEAR, page 13

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# OCTOBER 2024 Year in Review

## Homeschoolers move to make a difference

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – A group of homeschool families got together at Buttery Brook Park to plan out various community service projects, and the kids came up with visiting the elderly, planning their own food drive, helping with yard work, or helping at an animal shelter.

By far, the kids were most excited about doing a trash clean-up along route 33, expressing their excitement to get out on the sidewalks to pick up the trash.

“I want to make sure the earth is healthy with no trash,” one little girl named Violet said.

“No one should be throwing trash out their windows,” Paige, another little girl said.

The kids put on gloves, and grabbed their grocery bags, and ran off to start finding anything from wrappers to cans to bottles to papers littering the sides of the road.

Sarah Hull, who began homeschooling her children in 2015, fell in love with the flexibility of it, one of the biggest factors in allowing the kids and their friends to come together to help their neighbors with these community service projects.

Despite what most public opinion or belief of homeschooling, there is more opportunity than one would



The kids are eager to go and start collecting trash, holding up their bags with gloves on.

expect for kids to get out and “get socialized”, a common concern outsiders tend to have.

“I think there is a common misconception that homeschooling equals social isolation, and that couldn’t be further from the truth,” Hull said. “It’s quite overwhelming sometimes what we have offered to us, and the amount of families we interact with every day.”

From having the flexibility and freedom to take studies on the go, to being able to set times to do work at friends’ houses, and beyond, home-

schooling does not mean staying at home.

“Volunteering and giving back is extremely important to me. I want my children to always feel gratitude for the life we have, and to do their part to make the world a better place,” Hull said.

The group of homeschool families is eager to get into their next community service projects, and is asking the community to reach out to ask for help. You can find willing and ready helpers by contacting Sarah Hull at sarahcdw2003@yahoo.com.

## Obituary

### DEATH NOTICE

David Oliver LaRoche  
Died Dec. 25, 2024  
No services  
Beers & Story Funeral Home

## David Oliver LaRoche

SOUTH HADLEY—David Oliver LaRoche, 86, passed away Dec. 25, 2024 at his home surrounded by family. He was born on April 26, 1938 in Holyoke, Massachusetts to the late Oliver and Della (Ganard) LaRoche. David proudly served his country in the United States Army, retiring as a Major in 1998. He loved to travel and frequently took cruises to destinations all over the world.



Besides his parents, David was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Shirley A. (Gress) LaRoche in 2011, and four older siblings.

He is survived by his children, Craig LaRoche and wife Sue of Southwick, Lisa Sheridan and husband Francis of Belchertown, and Eric LaRoche and wife Carolyn of Virginia. He also leaves his grandchildren Kurt, Matthew, Kellie (Christopher), Katelyn, Michael, Alexander and Logan as well as two great grandchildren, Ryder and Evangeline. He also leaves behind his companion of eight years, Joanne LaPlante as well as several nieces and nephews.

No services will be held, per David’s request. In lieu of flowers, donations in his name can be made to Holyoke VNA Hospice by visiting [www.holyokevna.org](http://www.holyokevna.org)

## Consider running for local office in South Hadley

### Nomination Procedures:

Nomination papers are available in the Town Clerk’s Office at Town Hall (116 Main St, South Hadley, MA) beginning the first week of December for the offices listed below. The Annual Town Election is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

• Candidates must be 18 years old or older and a registered voter in South Hadley.

- Town-wide candidates need to obtain 50 certified signatures.
- Town meeting candidates need to obtain 10 signatures from their precinct.
- Candidates are encouraged to obtain additional signatures. All signatures must

be returned to the Town Clerk’s Office for certification. If the candidate does not obtain the correct amount of signatures, they cannot appear on the ballot.

### Important Deadlines:

- Last day to obtain nomination Papers: Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025, at 5 p.m.

- Last day to submit nomination papers to the Clerk’s office: Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025, at 5 p.m.

All questions, comments, or concerns should be directed to the Town Clerk’s office by phone at 413-538-5030, ext. 6183, or by email at [elections@southhadley.ma.gov](mailto:elections@southhadley.ma.gov).

### NEW YEAR from page 12

The school’s English teacher, Amy Foley, has been teaching for twenty-nine years, and is also looking forward to welcoming in her new students to her classroom, and to the school.

“My favorite part of teaching is the community that is created in each of my classes every year. Learning about each other and respecting and celebrating individuals increases engagement and learning in my classroom,” Foley said.

### Mosier Elementary School

Assistant Principal David Gallagher at Mosier is ready to welcome students and is looking forward to what this new year will bring.

“At the beginning of the year I love seeing our returning students and hearing what they did during vacation. It is also exciting to welcome a whole new grade to Mosier School and begin getting to know them,” Gallagher said.

Sarah Overgaard, the school’s third grade teacher, has been teaching for ten years, and loves spending time getting to know her students, and her fellow staff and coworkers.

Overgaard got the chance to “loop” with many of her students this year, following them into the next grade to be their teacher again. “I am the most excited to watch them continue to grow into the awesome kids that they already are,” Overgaard said.

### Plains Elementary School

“This year, I am looking forward to a great school year! In particular, I am looking forward to our two new programs: 1. New social emotional, and academic well-being program and 2. new math program,” Principal Carla Lussier said.

“The students are always participating and wanting to say what they know. This is also where they share anything and everything...and I mean everything,” Macey said.

But the year isn’t complete without acknowledging the hard work of all the teachers and staff who work hard to put together the classrooms and more for their students.

### 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 14, 2025 at #1 Library Lane-Carnegie Building-Top Floor** to consider the following:

1. 7:30 p.m.: “RDA” filed by Thomas Balbony to see whether the area/activities depicted on the plan referenced are subject to the jurisdiction of the

Wetlands Protection Act and its regulations with regards to property located at 41 Forge Pond Rd and known as Map 14-C, Lot/parcel-A-11, 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 mate-

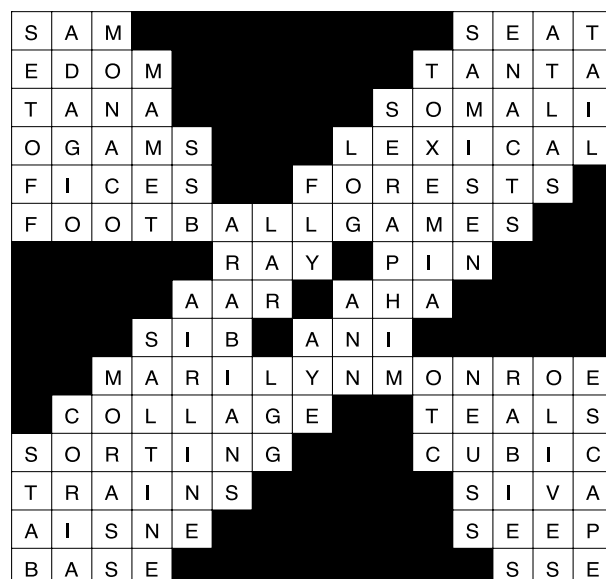
rials (including text and maps) relative to this “RDA” are available for inspection during regular business hours at the Selectmen’s Office located in the Granby Senior Center Building, 2nd Floor, 10-B West State Street. Additionally, copies of the application may be inspected on the Conservation Commission’s web page at [www.granby-ma.gov](http://www.granby-ma.gov).

William Shaheen, Chair  
Granby Conservation Commission

01/03/2025

## Public Notice

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



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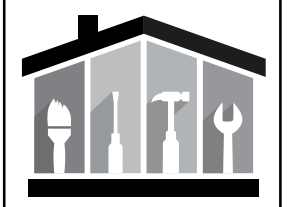
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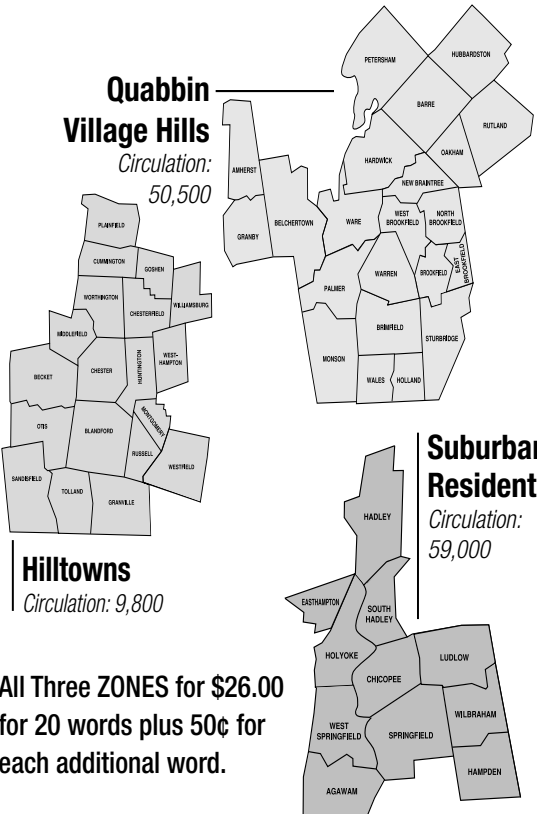
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**NOVEMBER**

**2024 Year in Review**



The members of public safety who came to give the special presentation: (left to right) Agent Chris Barbadoro of the Springfield FBI, Rachel Webber of the DA office, Dave Fenton from TRIAD, Anita Wilson of the DA office, Granby Police Chief Kevin O’Grady, an agent from the IRS, Officer Gary Poehler, Stephane Pratt with Florence Savings Bank in Granby, and officer Alan Brooks.

**Safety officers provide special talk on fraud and scam prevention**

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

GRANBY – In order to spread awareness about internet safety, scams, and fraud prevention, the Police Department as well as agents from the Springfield FBI, the IRS, security from Florence Bank, and the Northwestern DA’s office came to the senior center for an information session.

Michele Lawrence from the Florence Bank Security Team gave a special presentation regarding online scams having to do with money, and how the banks work to help you keep your money safe.

The general rule when it comes to your money and people you don’t know asking for money is this: if you don’t know them, don’t send them anything.

Scams can come in all shapes and forms, from an official-looking text from “UPS” asking you to confirm your address or payment details, or an email pretending to be your phone company but is clearly not.

People can hack into your bank accounts and steal your identity through something as simple as sending you an unknown link that you click on.

Phone calls asking you questions for you to say “yes” or “no” are recorded, and your voice saying these phrases can be used by scammers to access your accounts.

The dangers of online scams are real, however, banks and the IRS are prepared to help people get justice for the crimes committed against them, as well as protect your money.

However, it’s important to remember that law enforcement cares, and other members of security from banks and the IRS want you to know that they are here for you.

“Take a minute, check, slow it down. Report what’s happening. If we don’t know about it, we can’t help,” said a special agent from the IRS, who works to help spread awareness of the dangers of online scams.

The IRS is here to protect you and your money, and doesn’t send the police to arrest you, an example of another type of scam in order to trick you into paying them.

Officer Alan Brooks came on to warn about bail scammers, who will also call over the phone to ask for cash or over-the-phone payment in order to release a family member or friend on bail.

However, police stations will never call you for bail, and you must go directly to the station.

“If it seems too good to be true, or sounds suspicious, call the police,” Officer Brooks said. “This can happen to anyone, and its important to be aware of the dangers.”

“They’ll make you feel nervous, rushed, and try to keep you on the phone for a long time,” said DA Rachel Webber about scammers.

Granby is very well-informed when it comes to keeping people and their money safe, and the law enforcement members are here for you, and ready to take any call, no matter what.



The talented actors are getting ready to begin! The Tin Man, Dorothy, Toto, and one of the witch’s guards.

**Actors prepare for a diverse rendition of the Wizard of Oz**

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – For years, one of the classic productions has been The Wizard of Oz, and production teams from all over the world have put on wonderful renditions of this timeless classic.

Cynthia Strycharz and Dan Mascia, the director and music director for the local small community theater group The South Hadley Players, worked hard to make this production perfect.

The play is composed of around forty people in the cast, and twelve people made up the production staff in order to make this beloved classic come to life.

“We try to be really inclusive of all ages,” said Strycharz. “We have a great cast here of all different people from elementary kids to adults in the community.”

The South Hadley Players has been going for about a year now, and came from the two older community production groups, the South Hadley Community Theater and Black Cat.

Dan Mascia and Strycharz have been working together since 1990, and the pair work together beautifully, creating beautiful performances of well-organized cast members.

The orchestra put together and orchestrated by Mascia consists of drums, piano, and trumpet, and will serve to add more depth to the project and accompany the actors and actresses.

“I’m really delighted and excited to play him,” said Jeremy Swartz, who will play the Tin Man. “I’m excited for everything to come together. I know I had what it takes to be the Tin Man.”

Sofia Allegranza, who plays Dorothy, shared her enthusiasm as well. “This is one of my favorite movies, so I’m excited to be able to play Dorothy, who was my favorite from the time I was five and dressed as her for Halloween.”

Parents, kids, friends, and neighbors are all working together to make this play come to life in a perfect revealing of the community found within South Hadley.



The group who came for the ceremony gathered around Adamson’s headstone.

**Legion holds ceremony to honor British paratrooper**

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – When it comes to the many wars fought through the centuries, World War II marks one of the biggest moments in our nation’s history where we fought alongside our allies to fight against tyranny.

Brian Willette and David Jubinville learned about once such WWII hero buried here in South Hadley from his granddaughter, Melissa Kosior, who came to tell his story.

Pte. Hugh Adamson was a paratrooper in WWII, a volunteer to drop behind enemy lines, and was a prisoner of war twice during his service, once in Italy, where he escaped, and a second time in Holland in the city of Arnhem.

“All these people are here to honor and celebrate a man they have never met. As my grandfather would be, I’m beyond appreciative for the time and energy that went into this evening. I can’t thank them enough,” Kosior said on behalf of her family.

“This to us is an honor to honor Hugh in this way,” Willette said. “It was a long-time goal that we had to do this. We’ve been aware for a number of years about Mr. Anderson.”

As Willette and Jubinville got to know more about Adamson’s story and passing, and that he was buried in South Hadley, they knew a ceremony needed to take place in order to honor this hero.

“His country was in its greatest hour and time of need, and he answered the call. He not only volunteered to serve, but also to be a paratrooper. In that way he inspires me,” said Willette.

Willette shared an address, as well as a reading of a letter from Major Paul Raison, the secretary of the Parachute Regimental Association, Regimental Headquarters of the Parachute Regiment in the UK.

“Private Hugh Adamson, like so many others, stepped up to defend his beliefs. He felt it was his duty to join the Airborne Forces, the newest concept at the time,” wrote Raison.

Raison also included the Airborne Prayer, which Willette read during the ceremony to honor those who have fallen.

“It was very satisfying, and very rewarding, to know that we were able to honor an ally and fellow paratrooper in our closest allies, the British,” Willette said.

**Auxiliary hosts craft fair to raise money for veterans**

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

GRANBY – With the arrival of the Christmas season, people are looking for that perfect gift, but finding a gift with a personal touch is easy to find at a craft fair.

An even better way is to support a good cause while you do your shopping, and the Granby Auxiliary has been hosting a special craft fair for the past three years.

“Seeing all the local artisans and handmade crafts is my favorite,” said Jen Bernatchez, the president of the Granby American Legion’s Auxiliary. “It’s nice to see what they made and support local businesses.”

The day featured a raffle, and each of the seventeen vendors donated an item towards it. The money raised from the raffle, as well as the table costs for the fair, went towards the Auxiliary to support them.

The Auxiliary has been working hard to raise money, and hosts a variety of fundraisers in order to support the Legion, and the families of veterans and active duty military.

The Auxiliary, every Christmas, puts money together to support a family of someone in active service by buying toys and other gifts for the family.

Some of the money raised from the craft fair goes towards this mission, and the rest goes to helping the Legion with what they need.



Members of the Granby Auxiliary: Tracy DuPont, Rose Ladue, Jen Bernatchez, Brenda Bak, Kim Durand, and Jenn Chauvin.

“I’m appreciative that people want to sign up and participate, as it is a fundraiser for the Auxiliary,” said Bernatchez. “My dad was active duty while I was growing up. It’s a way for me to give back to veterans and assist them in various ways.”

The craft fair raised a lot of money for the Auxiliary, and they are already looking forward to the next craft fair, where more opportunities to support our men and women in arms.

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# DECEMBER 2024 Year in Review

## Historic house transformed into something new

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

GRANBY — The holiday season is in full swing, and no matter the holiday you're buying a gift for, the best kind of gift is the unique kind. Right here in the town of Granby is a special place to find just the gift you are looking for: The Brick Parsonage.

The building was constructed in the 1830's, and was a former parsonage, and has since been inhabited by many different families.

Paul and Terry Mason now own the Brick Parsonage, and went through and fully renovated it, adding in a new remodeled kitchen, and decorating and adding additions to the rooms throughout the home.

"We walked into this house, and it needed a lot of work, but it was truly a labor of love," said Terry.

From renovating all the rooms in the house, to working with the town to get approvals for parking, turning the barn into

their own antique shop, and even converting half of the house into a beautiful Bed and Breakfast, their work had truly paid off.

"We try and offer more and more as the years go on," said Terry. "We're hoping that Granby can start offering things to the people here, and having this here, is I think, a good start."

The kitchen is fully stocked with new appliances, all while keeping the character of the house. There are renovations, 29 new windows, and even more added and renovated to make the place feel like home.

"Each room is decorated uniquely, to give it its own theme and space," said Paul. "People who come here can stay in a room that is unique to the other three."

The Bed and Breakfast has four beautiful bedrooms, and are different for the needs of the people staying. There is a comfortable communal living space, and a little kitchen with a fridge, coffee station, and microwave for use.

The pair have had a love for antiques,



The Brick Parsonage with its beautiful wrap-around porch, the perfect spot to enjoy the fresh air on a summer day.

and for years have had booths at the Brimfield Markets, and before moving to Granby, had a space in Westfield.

"When you reinvent something, some-

thing no one has ever seen before, it makes it so much more special than what you can find just at Walmart for a gift," said Paul.

## Kids enjoy ice cream, photos with Santa

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

GRANBY — While most get-togethers with Santa involve some cocoa and cookies or a pancake breakfast, the public school's PTO had something else in mind.

The Ice Cream with Santa event had a great turnout, and after dinner, kids and their families got the chance to come to East Meadow last weekend to enjoy a customized ice cream sundae and a photo with Santa after dinner.

The PTO works hard to build a community between the students and teachers and works to support them by providing events where they can get to know each other outside of the classroom.

"I love helping with the children and supporting the teachers," said Leslie Baran, the PTO's Treasurer and a former teacher.

"It's about helping the schools and engaging with the community," said the PTO co-chair Audrey Siudak. "It's so I can be involved with the school my kid is in. We're trying to give back to the schools in any way we can."

The teachers really benefit from these special PTO events especially and make it so that they can see the kids outside of a teacher-student setting and relationship, which helps them learn more about the kids in their classroom, and how to interact with them.

"I'm a teacher, so I get to know the parents in a capacity I normally wouldn't," said Sara McNutt. "It's nice to be able to put things together for the kids, including my own."

"Being able to create events that bring the com-



Ella, Reed, Nora, and Lillian smiling after telling Santa what's on their lists for Christmas.

munity to the schools is my favorite part," said Erica Marsh.

The Ice Cream with Santa night was just one of many events that the PTO has put together, and with the services of photographer Brian Marsh taking professional photos with Santa, it made the night even more special.

## Selectboard accepts donation for Comfort Dog Program

By Emily-Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY — Like Oliver in Belchertown and Auggie in Amherst, South Hadley has finally joined the Comfort Dog team, with nine-week old English Lab, Murphy.

Murphy has been with the police department for about a week now, and his presence has already been very rewarding, with the department themselves feeling more at ease and experiencing more joy at Murphy's presence.

The Selectboard met with representatives from Mount Holyoke College, Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement Josh Powers, and President of College Relations Cassandra Jolley, to receive a \$4,000 donation.

The money will go towards funding the training and necessary licenses that will be needed in order for Murphy to become an officially registered comfort dog.

"It is Mount Holyoke's ab-

solute pleasure to support something very special for our community," said Jolley. "We know Murphy will be a wonderful addition to our community."

"Comfort dogs are becoming very prevalent in community policing, and they have a measurable impact on serving the community," Powers said.

With 2,000 students on Mount Holyoke's Campus, the school is happy to help a program that will in turn be able to help the students in a school so embedded within the community.

"It means a great deal to have Murphy as a partner," said Officer Emily Tebo, who will have Murphy as her trusty partner. "He will be able to help on calls where it is appropriate and safe for him to hop out of the car."

"He's going to be a huge asset to both us and the community on mental health related calls," said Tebo.

The gift and positive effects of Murphy's presence has already been felt by Tebo just at home, and he is calming, silly, and sweet to everyone he meets.

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