

# TOWN Reminder

FREE  
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Chief Jennifer Gunderson of the South Hadley Police Department at the Council on Aging for her office hours.

## Gunderson hosting special office hours for community

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

SOUTH HADLEY – The police department is home to many dedicated men and women, and for the past six years, has been led by a chief who prioritizes the members of the department, and the community.

Chief Jennifer Gunderson hosts special office hours for the community to come and get the chance to have a conversation with her and ask her questions and more about her responsibilities as chief, or to offer compliments, or share about their experiences.

“I’m here to help people. I’m here to listen to their comments and questions,” said Gunderson.

“I appreciate offering this to the community for them to offer suggestions.”

An example of how you can utilize these office hours is to come in to bring concerns and offer suggestions about how the department can better help them.

“I always ask them how they

Please see **CHIEF**, page 7

## Musical talent celebrated at PVPA

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

SOUTH HADLEY – Music is one of the best ways to express ourselves, and there isn’t anyone out there that doesn’t have a favorite song or music genre.

Music connects us to one another, and at the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School, there are multiple opportunities to learn and hone in on the skills of music and beyond.

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

“It’s very hard for me to point to one specific thing as being my favorite part of teaching here,” said Cavallin.

Some of the best parts of his time as director have included organizing the school’s annual “We Came to Play” Fall Music Tour, and directing Gig Band for the past three years, as well as Noteworthy: A Cappella for the past four. He also directed last year’s mainstage musical.

All of these reasons and more are some of the highlights,

Please see **MUSIC**, page 9



Chris G. looking cool playing the piano during the Adagio performance.

Submitted photo

## What to do when faced with fraud and scams

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

SOUTH HADLEY – Criminals are finding new ways to attack us with constant scams. Technology only serves to make that slightly easier than expected.

Just like all other police departments, the South Hadley Police Department is dedicated to helping community members who have been attacked by these scams and frauds and can help you when you discover you’ve been targeted.

“Some of the most common types of scams and frauds include the grandparent scam, fraudulent Amazon orders, and computer virus scams,” said Officer Emily Tebo.

Frauds can look real, but the email that sends the message usually gives it away.

“Some of the newer scams we have been seeing are the MA EZ Pass scams and since it is the season, fraudulent tax returns and identity theft,” said Tebo.

The EZ Pass scams hit phones via text messages last week was a request of payment from someone claiming to represent your EZDrive account for EZPass.

Tax season scams are also very common, many of which are tricky to differentiate as everyone is looking for responses regarding their tax returns and more at this time.

“If someone believes they have been a victim of a scam, they should alert their bank(s) and credit card companies immediately. If their Social Security number has been compromised, they should contact the Social Security Administration to let them know,” said Tebo.

“Folks can use credit mon-

Please see **SCAMS**, page 2

## Winter wildlife in our town

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

SOUTH HADLEY – The wildlife in our town is diverse, stretching across all the different conservation areas, as well as through the different parts of town and along the Falls.

Rebekah Cornell, South Hadley’s Conservation and Administrator and Planner has been with us since August 2021, serving the town, and providing guidance on how to go about protecting these special parts of our land and our wildlife.

“Exploring the town’s con-

servation lands, learning about the local trees and wildlife, and getting to know residents that are as passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship as I am,” said Cornell, reflecting on the best part of her job.

Cornell shared a presentation as a part two of a series to talk about the town’s conservation areas, using feedback from residents that they don’t use the trails in these areas, only because they don’t know where they are, or how to access them.

“My intention for the presentation was to give a brief in-

Please see **WINTER**, page 7



Rebekah Cornell sharing with those gathered at the COA the different animals to be found in the conservation areas in South Hadley.

# ▶ Granby

## Granby public library hosts new board game club

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

GRANBY – When the weather gets cold, everyone is looking for ways to spend some time indoors, but not always wanting to be in front of a screen.

The Granby Free Public Library has started a new club through the mind of Xander Huff, president of the Friends of the Granby Public Library, who wanted to see something more come to the library.

For the first meeting of this new club, Huff, Louisa Davis-Freeman, and Isaac and Paul Barba got together to play the game Pandemic.

The goal of the game is to develop a cure for all four diseases in the game, while making sure the world doesn't get overrun by them.

"It's an opportunity to strategize in a safe way and get to know how people think," said Huff. "It's problem-solving, and really stretches your brain in a fun way."

"I really like that it allows for me to get to know people and sharing some time together with them," said Louisa.

"I think it's a good way to have fun without looking at a screen, and having time to be with people," said Isaac.

"It's a nice way to spend time with the children- some one-on-one or one-on-three time," said Paul, Isaac's dad.

The club will happen on the third Saturday of the month, once a month, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with plenty of time to get through a full round of a board game.

The board games available to be played will be for ages eight and up, with different kinds of games to be played with a partner or group.

"My intent is to focus less on party games, and sticking more to quieter games," said Huff.

These "quieter" games include dice games, strategy games like Pandemic, or other fun group games like Clue.



Xander Huff, Louisa Davis-Freeman, Isaac and Paul Barba together playing the game Pandemic at the club's first meeting.

Turley Photo by Emily-Rose Pappas

People can donate board games to the club to be shared and played together, and the library has allocated some money to the club to be able to purchase new games to be enjoyed.

"My inspiration was that I love board games, and I wanted to find people to play with," said Huff. "I also wanted to help create something that would make the library be a place people can go to hang out, and just be together."

As the president of the Friends of the Granby Public Library, Huff has had many unique opportunities to support the library, and has found great joy in beginning this new club to bring in more people to the library and spend an afternoon resting and enjoying a good game.

"I wanted to bring this in to encourage people to create groups of their own," Huff said. "Getting people together is really important to me. People really need

that one-on-one connection with others, especially after COVID."

Take some time next month to stop by the library on February 17 to enjoy some time with others playing a game, and if you have games you'd like to donate, feel free to bring them up to the front desk and specify they are for the club. You can find more information about the club at the library, and on their Facebook page.

### SHPD chief office hours

SOUTH HADLEY—The South Hadley Chief of police office hours for the month of January.  
p.m. at the South Hadley Center  
**Wednesday, Jan. 29** - 12 noon  
-2 p.m. at Neighbors Helping Neighbors  
**Thursday, Jan. 23** - 5 - 6:30

### SCAMS from page 1

itoring services to see what if any accounts are being opened in their name. In addition, contacting the FBI via IC3.gov. Forms can be filled out there detailing the scam and what if any monetary losses occurred."

"The South Hadley Police is always available if there are ever any questions," said Tebo. If you discover you have fallen for a scam like the EZPass one from last week, you can call the police department at (413) 538-8231. The sooner you call the better to avoid as much damage as possible.

"The police department connects people with resources by spreading the word through such outlets as Facebook, The Town Reminder, and being available 24/7 to answer questions from members of the community," said Tebo.

Scam callers, texts, or emails all portray a sense of urgency, and demand immediate action from you, saying things

like "act now to avoid being arrested", or in regards to fees or account closures if fees are not paid immediately.

For example, with IRS messages, some may try and scare you into giving financial information by saying that there is an officer or sheriff coming to arrest you. However, there will never be a phone call warning of an arrest in real-world situations.

"If you are being asked to provide payment to someone either by gift card or by Bitcoin, those should be clues to folks that this is a scam. I always tell people to slow down and think. Scammers want things to happen very quickly to get people flustered. Try not to let that happen," said Tebo.

"The police department is always around if there's ever a question if the situation you are in is a scam or attempted fraud. Do not hesitate to call. Calling us is better than giving away your hard earned money."

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Photo submitted

## Guided public trek at Ledges Golf Course on Feb. 8

SOUTH HADLEY— On Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025 at 11 a.m. the South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee will host a guided Trek at the Ledges Golf Club, 18 Mulligan Road, South Hadley, a property owned by the Town of South Hadley. Bike/Walk members Ruth Camuse and Jim Buckley will lead the Trek. Come and spend a Saturday morning enjoying the outdoors! Winter is a great time to explore the course, using paths normally reserved for golfing carts. During the off-season the paths may be enjoyed for exercise, photography, and beautiful views of the area, including Mount Tom on the other side of the Connecticut River. The grounds offer an opportunity for safe, non-vehicular passive recreation, such as walking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Visitors should avoid the tees and greens, being careful not to damage fairway areas.

Meet at 10:45 a.m. in front of the Ledges Clubhouse. The Club's parking lot is located on

the right before the circle by the Clubhouse. Wear weather-appropriate clothing and hiking boots or other appropriate footwear, and bring water and walking poles, if desired. If there is snow on the ground, participants may wish to use cross-country skis or snowshoes. Please be aware that the club facilities, including restrooms, are closed for the season. Participants of all ages and new Trekkers are always welcomed!

Treks are subject to change or cancellation due to weather or ground conditions. Please be sure to check the Bike/Walk page on the Town website for any cancellation notices or other information: <http://www.southhadley.org/bikewalk>. Should there be a cancellation decision, information will be posted online by 8 p.m. the night before the hike. Our Ledges Golf Course Trek Map showing the Ledges cart paths and several Trek routes can also be found on the Bike/Walk page.

## Consider running for office

### 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).

# FY 2026 budget discussed at Selectboard meeting

By Emily- Rose Pappas  
Staff Writer  
[epappas@turley.com](mailto:epappas@turley.com)

SOUTH HADLEY – The Selectboard held a productive meeting last week, holding a series of interviews, as well as discussing and signing important documents, and discussion of the FY26 Budget.

At the January 7 meeting, Chair Andrea Miles was joined by Vice Chair Jeff Cyr, Clerk Carol Constant, members Renee Sweeney and Nicole Casolari. Also in attendance was Town Administrator Lisa Wong.

### FY26 Budget Discussion

Town Administrator Lisa Wong shared a presentation with the board discussing the newly updated FY26 Budget.

Across the state, the Governor's budget will be released, and by the end of January, the Capital Planning Committee will draft the capital plan.

There is a projected 15% increase, and there will be set hearing dates for budget, group health insurance rates, and a set school target budget.

In February, the Selectboard will create initial budget presentations with ongoing Capital Planning Committee meetings.

In March, the Selectboard and School Committees will hold Budget Hearing, and votes will happen. This is also where a possible hearing of Enterprise Find rates will occur.

In April, there will be an Appropriations Review of the budget, with a set hearing dates at the end of April and early May in order to finalize the budgets to bring to Town Meeting, which is currently scheduled for May 14.

They reviewed the budget goals, which are divided into general funds, capital investments, and enterprise funds, as well as budget principles which outline.

State Aid had an \$1.48m increase in FY23, and they are waiting on updates in late January for the Governor's budget to see the changes for FY26.

Property taxes have shown themselves to be increasing by 2.5%, and new growth and debt exclusion added about \$1 million, with a new growth estimation of \$150k.

The local receipts increased by \$200k over FY24, and for retained earnings, a review of the Wastewater and Landfill rates is needed.

The Selectboard reviewed expense considerations, includ-

ing bargaining agreements with the DPW and Police who will have new contracts in FY26.

There is an expected 12-15% increase in health insurance, and for utilities as well with rates to be determined. More funds for maintenance of older buildings in town will be considered, as well as unions for the school departments and new contracts in FY26 will be announced, as well as the use of one-time ARPA funds.

"There's a lot of great stuff happening," said Cyr.

### Landfill Post Closure Account

Wong shared with the board information regarding the landfill post closure account, and the contract extension, with a rise in price of about \$4,000 with a total for the new contract of \$28,000 per month for additional PFAS Services.

Because of the amount being over \$200,000 for the year, it required a vote of approval by the Selectboard, and they unanimously approved for Wong to sign and approve the Landfill Post Closure Account.

### EPA Audit Letter and FRCOG Signatory Appointed

Lisa Wong shared a Pretreatment Compliance Audit Letter from the South Hadley Wastewater Treatment Plant, and gave a report detailing the audit, as well as providing a summary of recommendations for the town.

Wong expressed gratitude to Melissa Labonte, the Pretreatment Coordinator, for her hard work on the audit letter and for the work that she does for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The board moved to appoint Wong as the designated signatory for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, or FRCOG.

### Traffic Review Annual Report

The Traffic Review Committee is composed of members of the town government, DPW, and police department who work towards analyzing and reviewing traffic in South Hadley.

Assistant Town Administrator Chuck Romboletti joined remotely to give a presentation on the report, with data detailing a rise in crashes according to data from the state and local reporting.

The department recently acquired UrbanSDK technology, which collects anonymous GPS

data of drivers and their speeds so that when speeding is reported, the Chief can directly look it up.

They also briefly shared the updates regarding the new unhitched trailer bylaw, which was approved of and passed at the Town Meeting in November 2024.

Chief Gunderson and the other members of the Traffic Review Committee shared a draft for a new policy to put into place, which will be for Traffic Calming Measures.

The Traffic Calming Measures will include, after detailing both local and state laws around traffic and speed limit regulations, traffic calming elements like speed bumps and speed humps, curb extensions, neighborhood roundabouts, raised crosswalks, and more.

The draft policy was created in an attempt to begin conversations on how to address the speeding incidents within the town, and from there, next steps to take in order to ensure the safety of the town and its residents.

### Affordable Housing Trust Interviews

The Selectboard held a moment of time to hold interviews for the Affordable Housing Trustees Board, with member Noah Harper.

Harper provided the board with documents about the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board, and the processes needed to go over during the interviews for the applicants.

"Essentially, we worked with the town, and the town did a really good job getting the word out advertising these positions were open," said Harper.

He shared that they needed five positions filled, and four came forward. He shared that they are looking for people with experience in architecture, real estate, finance, development, and applicants living in affordable housing, all required to be residents of South Hadley.

The board asked each of the four applicants the same questions during the interview, and they included Sarah Harper, Naomi Darling, Brad Hutchinson, and Ken Leblanc.

The board moved unanimously to appoint all four applicants to their respective terms, with Harper, Darling, and Hutchinson for a term ending in June 2026, and Leblanc in June 2025. Carol Constant joined in the Selectboard seat.

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## Opinion



### Supplemental heat and light aid seed starting efforts

Last week we looked at the supplies needed to start seeds indoors. This week we will dive deeper.

If you have never tried indoor seed starting, it is a worthwhile endeavor for sure. You can grow exactly what you want instead of being defendant on what lines the shelves of local nurseries each May.

Furthermore, there is great satisfaction in having a part of the "miracle." No matter how many times I have witnessed the germination process, it still amazed me that a tiny seed has what it takes within to grow into a plant. All that is needed is heat, moisture and light.

Almost all bedding plants, as well as some vegetables and herbs need warmth to germinate. We provide bottom heat through the use of heating cables or mats set at temperatures between 70-75 degrees.

This poses the question of whether or not seeds will germinate at regular household temperatures of close to seventy degrees. Probably, but not to their fullest potential since ideal temperature is measured not by air temps but by the temperature of the growing medium.

A room set at 70 degrees is likely to have temperatures within the germinating flat five to 10 degrees cooler, due to evaporation at its surface. Invest in a heat mat – if used for a few weeks each season it will likely last a decade or two.

There are many types available to suit your own specific growing needs, even mini mats that are about the size of a standard flat. Perfect if all you are growing indoors are a pack or two of peppers and tomatoes!

Supplemental lighting comes into play at the instant your seeds have sprouted. Bottom heat is not necessary henceforth (it is even discouraged!).

Seedlings are removed from heat and placed within 3-6 inches of the light source. For short-term use, a shop light affixed with two cool fluorescent bulbs has worked fine for me, although one cool and one warm bulb was recommended "back in the day" to better simulate the full spectrum of the sun's rays.

Now, LEDs are an energy conscious replacement; one I will make when my fluorescent bulbs give out. If you are using fluorescent bulbs, be sure to keep your seedlings away from the ends of the bulb where the lights wanes.

If you plan to use lights for long-term growth a "grow-light" may be a good, albeit more costly investment. Many duplicate the sun quite well, and some are tailored to meet the needs of specific plant types.

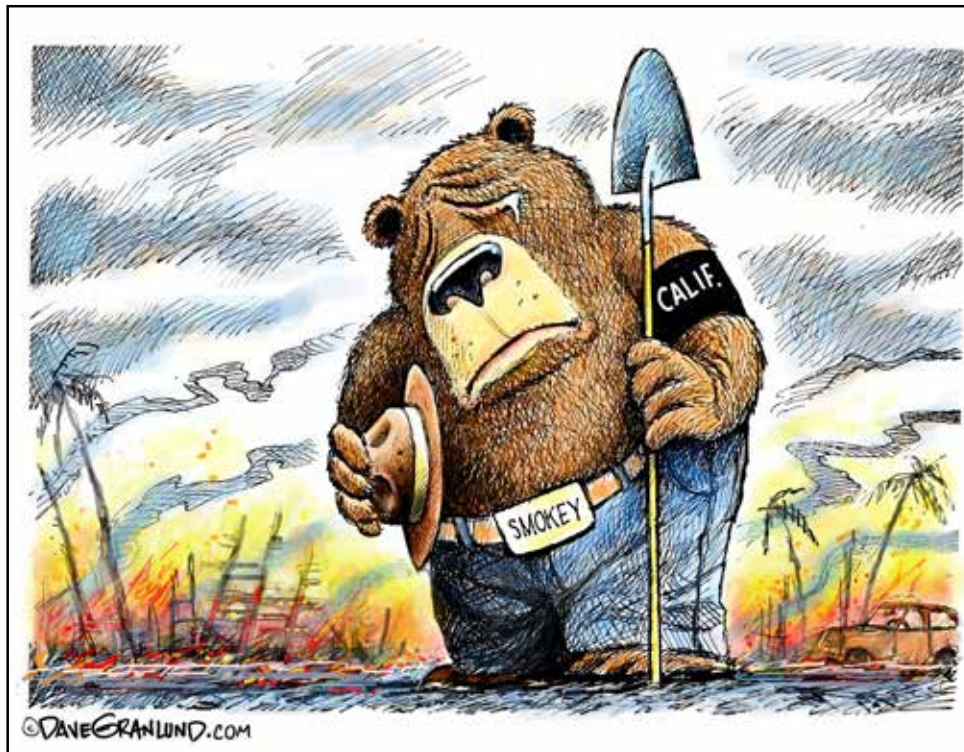
For example, some contain more orange and red hues to promote fruiting and budding. They are priced by life expectancy, output and light spectrum.

Installing the lights of your choice with reflectors or "mirrors" will maximize intensity, and suspending the whole system with chains from the ceiling will make for easy raising as your seedlings grow.

If you plan to grow just a few seedlings and don't want to invest in lights, try positioning them in front of an unshaded south window. Turn the seedling flats numerous times during the day to promote straight, stocky growth. Plants that are tall and spindly indicate light intensity is too low.

Please give heat mats and supplemental lights a try, especially if you haven't been successful with indoor seed sowing in the past. This could turn the page of a new chapter of growing for you!

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.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Attention South Hadley Veterans

#### Letter to the Editor

Governor Healy recently signed the Hero's Act into law which allows for the doubling of property tax exemptions for disabled veterans in the State. Since this Act is not funded by the State, it will be up to each city or town in the Commonwealth to decide whether to adopt this provision or not. On 12/12/24, Mayor Sarno of Springfield, signed a new ordinance doubling the property tax exemptions for their disabled veterans. This was approved by the Springfield City Council by a 9-0 vote. For 100% disabled veterans, the exemption goes from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and for veterans with a lower disability, the exemption goes from \$400 to \$800 effective FY 2026. I would like to see a similar ordinance enacted by the Town of South Hadley. In that regard, there will be a Selectboard meeting held on January 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. One of the agenda items will be to discuss the merits of

incorporating this provision for our Town. If approved by the Selectboard, it will go before the Town Meeting for an up or down vote. I would urge all South Hadley veterans, disabled or otherwise, to attend this meeting to show your support for this provision. There are approximately 200 disabled veterans in town that would benefit from such an ordinance. Any veteran who put on the uniform in defense of this country, and was disabled in the line of duty, deserves the upmost respect from its townspeople and are deserving any benefits that the State of Massachusetts or the town may convey on them. The Hero's act, signed by Governor Healy is a great step forward in providing the benefits they deserve by their service.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Wozniak,  
Town Meeting Member,  
Vietnam Veteran



Carolina wren

A Brimfield resident sent me a list of birds on Jan. 2 he saw in his yard.

On the list was a Carolina wren. He said in the email, "[The Carolina wren was] foraging in the leaves under shrubs and has been seen at the feeders more frequently recently."

The Carolina wren is six inches long and has brown feathers above with buff below. It has a distinct white eyebrow and white barring in the tail area. It often holds its tail in an upward position.

The female lays four to eight creamy or pink white eggs with brown marks in a nest of mosses, twigs, rootlets, bark and sometimes snakeskins lined with finer materials.

They nest in tree holes and many other locations; they will use birdhouses.

The Carolina wren expanded its range into the northeast especially with the milder winters. There song is a loud, repeated "tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle." They inhabit forest understory, vines and woodlands in rural or suburban areas.

#### Other Brimfield birds

Other birds seen by the Brimfield resident beside the Carolina wren were four mourning doves, 20 American robins, 12 dark eyed juncos, one white-throated sparrow and two Northern cardinals. He said of the robins, "I first noticed one bird on the ground in the yard and 3 in a crab apple tree eating fruit. More flew into the tree then four on the ground foraging. More perched in a nearby tree." He also said, "We have ten crab apple trees in the yard and several of them have small fruit that is held on the tree into the winter."

#### Flocks of robins

In my travels last week, I saw flocks of robins on three occasions, twice in Barre and once in Oakham. The Oakham flock flew across the road and landed on the ground and in trees on the opposite side. The Brimfield resident reported his wife saw a flock of robins in the center of Brimfield eating crab apples near the post office twice in recent days. Christmas Bird Count

The Brimfield couple participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count in Ludlow. He

Please see **BACKYARD**, page 5

## OPINION PAGE/ LETTERS POLICY

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

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

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

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# A starlit hike in the White Mountains

By Julie Midura  
Correspondent

This was our final hike of 2024. It was 5:15am, and we were lying on our backs staring up at the stars, cocooned in our bright green two-person down sleeping bag atop several feet of snow on the wide open summit of Mt. Jackson in NH. The sun was still 2 hours from cresting the distant horizon. It was dead calm, but bitterly cold.

In spite of donning every layer in my winter arsenal, I shivered and snuggled closer to Tom as I gathered the excess fabric of the bag as close to my body as I could.

We had arrived at the trailhead parking lot almost 3 hours before. It was 0 degrees when we stepped out of our SUV and opened the back hatch to retrieve our backpacks. In a split second of hesitation, I questioned our sanity. ‘Who in their right mind climbs a mountain in the pitch black of night in these ungodly temperatures just to see the sun rise?’ Then I immediately thought, ‘Too late now. We dropped the motel key in the drop box a half hour ago in the dead of night, so we’ll be climbing this mountain whether I want to or not.’

As we moved upward along the snaking path, the beams of light from our headlamps danced between the snow covered trees, creating an aura of mystery as the long shadows stretched deep into the blackened forest. Our headlamps ignited the untouched snow on the sides of the trail, giving the illusion of walking on a smooth white carpet of infinite shimmering diamonds.

When we finally broke tree line, the crescent moon and twinkling stars welcomed us to a dark and windless summit. I stood, unmoving, serenaded by the whisper of starlight in the heavens above me.

Eight years of hiking in every season. Numerous hiking lists. Thousands of miles. Climbing the second tallest mountain in the continental United States. Section hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Every hike. Every backpacking trip. Every footprint left on every mountain.

Each one propelling us forward to the next... eventually leading us to this singular unforgettable moment.

A moment of being suspended in time, somewhere between our very first hike and what will someday be our very last. Suspended between the valley below and the heavens above while basking under the brilliance of a million twinkling stars against the backdrop of a black velvet sky, while waiting for the sun to awaken the earth in a blaze of fiery brilliance.

And although we hope that we’ll have the opportunity to experience a moment like this again, we’ve learned the hard way that there are no guarantees in this life.

So we settle in for however long it takes. We inhale the clean mountain air. We feel the cold kiss our cheeks and the silence fill our ears. We wait for the sun to silence the stars and breathe life onto the earth.

We remain snuggled in our lofty bright green sleeping bag on a snowy perch atop a 4,000-foot mountain for over four hours, unwilling to leave lest we miss one single minute of the magic that is unfolding in front of us.

And as we watch the black of night turn into the blazing red of dawn, we know that for the rest of our lives, for as long as there is breath in our lungs and blood running through our veins...

WE. WILL. NEVER. FORGET. THIS. MOMENT. See you in the wild places, my friends!

To read more about our hiking adventures, follow us on Instagram @more-thanthemountain.



Watching the sunrise from the summit of Mt. Jackson, NH.



LEFT: Snuggled in our sleeping bags on our snowy perch.



A visit from the infamous Grey Jays, with Mt Washington in the distance.

## BACKYARD from page 4

said, “We had 31 species in Ludlow, lots fewer birds at the reservoir because there was about 90% ice coverage [Saturday] compared to 10% Friday.”

### Suet cakes

I put out my suet feeder last month. I waited long enough because I did not have a bear either break or run off with the feeder. The birds are busy eating suet especially during this cold weather.

### New Hampshire Loon Preservation Committee

The New Hampshire Loon Preservation Committee reported in 2024 they surveyed 498 occupied or potential loon territories on 327 lakes to assess presence/absence and breeding success of loons and the success of LPC’s management to help them. They documented the presence of 359 loon pairs and 126 unpaired adult loons. They also floated a record 156 nest

rafts to help loon pairs displaced from their traditional nest sites by shoreline development, recreational lake use and water level fluctuations. They also installed signs and rope lines at 135 nesting loon pair locations.

They banded 57 loons and rescued 38 loons in distress and a result of illness or injury. The Loon Preservation Committee continued to expand their lead tackle buyback program. Ingestion of lost lead tackle by fisherman remained the cause of lead poisoning in the loon population. There were six documented deaths due to lead poisoning, two loon deaths from trauma due to boat strikes and two loon deaths due to entanglement in fishing gear in 2024.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

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|    |    |    |    | 39 | 40 | 41 |    | 42 | 43 |    |    |    |    |
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| 59 |    |    |    |    | 60 |    |    |    | 61 |    |    |    |    |
| 62 |    |    |    |    | 63 |    |    |    |    | 64 |    |    |    |

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. This regulates cortisol production (abbr.)
- 5. People of northern Vietnam
- 8. Employee stock ownership plan
- 12. Regions
- 14. The center of a city
- 15. Hindu serpentine deity
- 16. Roared
- 18. Sun up in New York
- 19. “Sir” in Malaysian
- 20. Shrimp dish
- 21. Muckraker Tarbell
- 22. Apex
- 23. Harmonic effects
- 26. One of Babe Ruth’s nicknames
- 30. Groups in organic chemistry
- 31. More pleasant-tasting
- 32. Spring forward
- 33. Noted writer
- 34. Building occupied by monks
- 39. “The world’s most famous arena”
- 42. Colorless liquid hydrocarbon
- 44. Long or fast speech
- 46. Things you can eat
- 47. Substance in which magnetic moments are not aligned
- 49. Actor Idris
- 50. I (German)
- 51. Taxes
- 56. Indonesian island
- 57. Nuisance (slang)
- 58. Shawl
- 59. Digits
- 60. Moved on foot quickly
- 61. “For goodness \_\_\_”
- 62. Facial body part
- 63. Russian river
- 64. Urinates

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Partner to “oohs”
- 2. Scaly water dweller
- 3. Pueblo people of New Mexico
- 4. Music producer Teo
- 5. Greek mythological goddess
- 6. Got together to discuss
- 7. Acquires
- 8. Involve
- 9. Some are tomato-based
- 10. Old Irish alphabets
- 11. A sheet of glass in a window or door
- 13. Blood poisoning
- 17. A moon of Saturn
- 24. Neither
- 25. Sums
- 26. They follow “A”
- 27. Satisfaction
- 28. People of southeastern Burma
- 29. Small amount
- 35. Guy (slang)
- 36. Sound unit
- 37. Midway between northeast and east
- 38. Affirmative
- 40. Almost at the top
- 41. Extremely slow
- 42. Pearl Jam’s debut album
- 43. Influential mid-century playwright
- 44. Martens
- 45. Approval
- 47. Dallas-adjacent Texas city
- 48. African nation
- 49. Dark brown or black
- 52. A place to get caught
- 53. Large-headed, elongated fish
- 54. Type of sword
- 55. Scottish tax or levy

## ► Education

# COLLEGE NEWS

## Fitchburg State announces Dean's list

FITCHBURG, Mass.—Fitchburg State University President Donna Hodge has announced the students who qualified for inclusion on the Dean's List for the Fall 2024 semester.

A student is placed on the Dean's List for the semester if an average grade of 3.20 or better is attained, and the student is attending the university full time.

Listed below are students who achieved this achievement.

**South Hadley**  
*James B. Isakson*  
*Casey A. Lacombe*

\*\*\*

## WNE fall 2024 president's list

SPRINGFIELD— Western New England University takes immense pride in recognizing the outstanding academic achievements of over 640 students who have been named to the president's list for the fall 2024 semester. The following local students were named to the president's list:

Abdul Azeem Chaudhry of South Hadley, Beau Briere of South Hadley, Brandie Dumais of Granby, Connor Asselin of Granby, Corey Rondeau of Granby, Cylie Kirejczyk of Granby, Dylan Laramee of Granby, Eric Cabezudo-Peters of South Hadley, Ethan Roy of South Hadley, Jordan Croteau of Granby, Logan Watts of South Hadley, Nicholas Parker of Granby and Robert Walsh of South Hadley.

\*\*\*

## WNE fall 2024 dean's list

SPRINGFIELD— Western New England University takes immense pride in recognizing the outstanding academic achievements of over 750 students who have been named to the dean's list for the fall 2024 semester. The following local students were named to the dean's list: Alexander Galusha of Granby, Andrew Feldman of Granby, Briyanna Coelho of Granby, Natalie Furman of Granby, Nolan Raymond of Granby, Sophia Gagnon of Granby, Evan Hughes of South Hadley, Kaily Godek of South Hadley, Karina Stefoglo of South Hadley and Jack Hartling of Granby.

\*\*\*

## SNHU announces Fall 2024 Dean's List

MANCHESTER, NH — It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Griffin Schoenborn of South Hadley; Sara Danio of South Hadley

\*\*\*

## Dylan Moore named to SNHU President's List

MANCHESTER, NH — Dylan Moore of Granby has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's (SNHU) Fall 2024 President's List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

## ► Community

## Dog licenses now available

SOUTH HADLEY— All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed annually in Massachusetts. It is important to license your dog annually, not only because it is the law, but because it will help reunite you and your pet if they escape, and help limit the spread of rabies in our community.

Renewal applications for dog licenses must be submitted by March 31, 2025, to avoid a \$5 late fee.

Fees for dog licenses in South Hadley are as follows: Spayed/Neutered dogs: \$15.00 per dog and Unspayed/Unneutered dogs: \$20.00 per dog.

Dog licenses may be purchased via any of the following ways: Online through OpenGov here: <https://southhadley.ma.portal.opengov.com/categories/1084/record-types/6425>; In-person in the Town Clerk's Office at 116 Main St. Please bring cash or a check for the fee and a current

copy of the rabies certificate. Office hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Fridays 8:30 a.m. to noon.; By mail using the insert at the bottom of the Census (to be mailed by late January), including the proper fee, a current copy of the rabies certificate, and a self-addressed envelope with 2 stamps.

Remember also to take the PUP Pledge. Help ensure your pet's waste does not wash with the next storm into drain pipes that flow into a nearby stream, river, or lake. Take the pledge now by visiting <https://thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/pup-pledge-form/>.

Any questions, comments, or concerns may be directed to the Town Clerk's Office by phone at 413-538-5030, ext. 6183, or by email at [townclerk@southhadley.ma.gov](mailto:townclerk@southhadley.ma.gov). More information is available at [www.southhadley.org/dog-licenses](http://www.southhadley.org/dog-licenses).

## 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**  
Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Our extended hours are now Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

## Christmas Tree Disposal

SOUTH HADLEY—Christmas trees WILL NOT be collected at the curbside. It is the responsibility of the resident to dispose of their Christmas tree responsibly, and can bring it to the yard waste area of the Recycle Center, located at 10 Industrial Drive, Tuesday-Saturday: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (closed noon - 1 p.m.), during the month of January, at no charge and with no appointment.

## Town bills mailed out

SOUTH HADLEY— Real Estate and Personal Property bills were mailed out to residents on Dec. 31, 2024. The due date for Real Estate and Personal Property bills is Feb. 3.

If anyone has not received their bills, please email our office at: [collector@southhadley.ma.gov](mailto:collector@southhadley.ma.gov) or call 413-538-5030, ext. 6189 and a new bill can be sent. Bills can also be viewed/printed

through Invoice Cloud which can be accessed from the town website.

Payment can be made online through the Town of South Hadley's website, [southhadley.ma.gov](http://southhadley.ma.gov), by mail, dropped in our Dropbox located behind the Police Department on Bridge Street or pay in person Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## DCR lists upcoming winter hybrid presentations

BELCHERTOWN – The Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, announces the schedule for winter hybrid presentations.

All programs are scheduled for 2 p.m. In person seating is limited to 45 people.

In case of bad weather, the programs will only be held virtually. Please register for any of these events by visiting <https://www.mass.gov/locations/quabbin-reservoir/events>.

### Prince Walker of Barre From Enslaved to Landowner

*Sunday, Jan. 19 from 2-3 p.m.*

Born to an enslaved family in Barre in June 1774 Prince Walker spent much of his life on a homestead that is now part of the Ware River Watershed. Although known mainly as the much younger brother of Quock Walker (whose suit to attain personal freedom was instrumental in freeing all enslaved people in Massachusetts) Prince Walker led a remarkable life.

Join Lucy Allen from the Barre Historical Society as she presents on his trek to freedom and financial independence.

### Understanding Fish Species at Quabbin Reservoir

*Sunday, Jan. 26 from 2-3 p.m.*

Creel surveys are a common technique used by fisheries professionals to better understand wa-

terbody specific catch and harvest trends. Creel data from Quabbin Reservoir were collected at each of the three boat launch areas during the 2024 fishing season.

The presentation will provide updates regarding participation, catch, harvest and species specific trends. These data will be compared to other statewide and waterbody specific creel data collected by MassWildlife and Department of Conservation and Recreation.

### The Mystery of Prescott Quilt of Names

*Sunday, Feb. 2 from 2-3 p.m.*

Step back in time and delve into the intriguing story behind a remarkable artifact that has woven together generations—a quilt embroidered with fifty signatures from 1895, hailing from Prescott, Massachusetts. Who created this piece of history, and why? How did it make its way to the Hitchcock Chair Museum in Riverton, Connecticut, and who played a crucial role in returning it to the Swift River Valley Historical Society?

Join historical interpreter Karen Traub as she embarks on a fascinating journey to unravel the quilt's past.

### History of Rutland Prison Camp

*Sunday, Feb. 16 from 2-3 p.m.*

Fresh air, three home-cooked meals a day, comfortable sleeping

quarters and a private hospital - sounds like a delightful retreat for a prison? Indeed, it was!

This presentation will tell the story of this surprisingly successful social experiment nestled within the Ware River Watershed.

### Microscopic world of the Quabbin Reservoir

*Sunday, Feb. 23 from 2-3 p.m.*

What's in the water? Learn about the microorganisms that live in the water, and how they can impact water quality.

This presentation will cover phytoplankton and zooplankton found in the Quabbin Reservoir with a live microscope demo.

### Quabbin Reservoir and Watershed Protection

*Sunday, March 2 from 2-3 p.m.*

Engineering, forestry, wildlife and aquatic biology, carpentry, mowing and snowplowing...how do all of these things combine to protect the water supply of over three million people in Massachusetts? How does they benefit the region around the reservoir?

This presentation from the Visitor Center staff explores how the many different goals of DCR staff all support one goal, Quabbin watershed protection.

support community journalism

## Events at SHPL

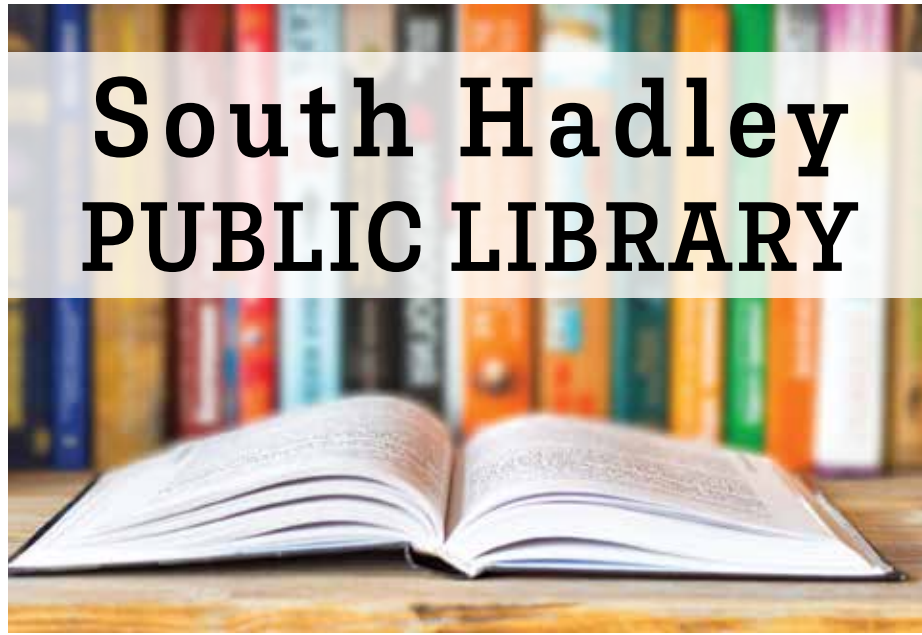
### Adult Programs at SHPL

Do you have a family heirloom or antique? Have you always been curious to know if it is valuable? Register for our online program: What's It Worth? An Online Antiques Road Show with Mike Ivankovich on Wednesday, January 22 at 6:00. You are also invited to join others in-person in the library Community Room to watch this online program. Register by clicking here or call 413-538-5045. Author, Auctioneer, Appraiser and Radio Show host Mike Ivankovich will introduce you to "What Determines Value"... and reveal what your antiques, collectibles, and personal treasures are really worth today. Each attendee is invited to show 1 - 2 items for Mike to appraise. The first 20 people to register will get their item appraised. If you are in person, please bring the item to share via the video camera. Mike Ivankovich has authored more than 20 books and eBooks about Antiques and Collectibles for more than 40 years.

### Online Author Programs

Notes on Modern Irrationality with Bestselling Author Amanda Montell. New York Times Bestselling Author of Cultish and The Age of Magical Overthinking. Thursday, Jan. 23 at 2:00.

An Inside Look at Working with a Literary Agent: A Conversation with Seth Fishman. Vice President and Agent at The Gernert Company. Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 1:00.



### Children's Programs at SHPL

New year, new program! STEAM Time on Tuesday afternoons 3:45-4:45 for kids ages 5-10 will be time to explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math. We might play Robot Turtles, paint with primary colors, use Snap Circuits, put together puzzles, or build penny boats. Other weekly programs include Lego & Games on Mondays & Wednesdays 3:00-4:45, Rhyme Time on Tuesdays at 10:30, and Story Time on Wednesdays at 10:30.

CFCE playgroup on Saturday, Jan. 25. (CFCE Playgroup also meets weekly on Thursdays at 10:30.)

My First Book Club meets Friday, Jan. 17 from 3:45-4:45. Sign up to Read to a Dog! Gwen will be here on January 22.

Looking for a reading challenge, or need recommendations?

### Join the Massachusetts Center for the Book Reading Challenge (Student Edition)

Read and vote for Massachusetts Children's Book Award (MCBA) nominees (for kids in grades 4-6)

Request a Book Bundle, personalized based on your reading preferences  
Questions, comments, suggestions? Email Jenny (jarch@cwmar.org).

### Teen Programs at SHPL

This month in Teens we continue with Crafternoon, Snackternoon and Xbox1. Our Snackternoon on Thursday, January 23 at 4:00, will feature Bagel Bites! Please sign up here. Thank you to the Friends of the South Hadley Public Library for sponsoring our Teen Snackternoon. We have a different game

selection for this month's Xbox1 session on Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 3:30.

This month features our brand new Switch which will be on Wednesday, January 15 & Monday, January 27 at 3:30. A new selection of games are available. We are bringing back our Teen Book Club Booktroverts. There is no in-person meet up. Enjoy the book on your own time. This month features Accountable by Dashka Slater. Copies are available in the Teen Room to check out.

Our Teen Takeaway craft this month is Ice Luminaries! See Bethany for more details or to sign up. You only need to sign up once. Teen Takeaways are available every month. Reach out with any questions through email (broberts@cwmar.org). See the Teen Room door for more information.

### Gaylord Memorial Library Programs

Join Latika Joshi to hear about Black Holes: Space-Time's Greatest Enigma! This all-ages program meets Thursday, Jan. 23 at 6 p.m. in the Gaylord rotunda. To look at the night sky yourself through Mount Holyoke's telescopes, join us at the Williston Observatory Thursday, January 30 from 6:00-8:00. Meet at the Gaylord parking lot at 6 to walk over to the observatory together. All ages welcome!

For kids, we have Story Time every Friday at 10:30 a.m. with Miss Janet. We have Drop-In Crafts Thursday, January 30 from 3 to 6 p.m., and Lego Club Thursdays, Jan. 23 from 3 to 6 p.m.. Families can join us on Saturday, Jan. 11 at 10:15 a.m. to play with Trains, Tracks, and Trucks, and Saturday, Jan. 18 at 10:15 a.m. for Board Games and Puzzles!

## WINTER from page 1

roduction such as where they are located, where to park, level of difficulty of trails and what plants and wildlife you might see," said Cornell.

The second part of the presentation series, titled Wintering, Weathering, and Wildlife in South Hadley, was hosted at the Council on Aging at the start of the new year, where people could come to learn about these conservation lands, and more.

Cornell gave a tour of the Conservation Commission's website, sharing how to find the trail maps and historic information regarding the conservation lands for them to learn more. You can find it on the town website under "Conservation Commission."

The presentation detailed several conservation areas and trails including Bachelor Brook to Stony Brook, and Black Stevens.

There is also the Leaping Well Nature Trail, Hahn Warner Arboretum, Bynan Conservation Area, and even a future land donation on New Ludlow Road.

Each of these trails and conservation areas is home to many unique wildlife and plant species, and you can find signs of nature that had passed through all around you.

Warner Conservation area is found just north of Route 202 and is filled with paths and walkways to explore through trees and fields.

There are stairs built into some walkways for you to explore the forested area, as well as some benches to take a rest at after exploring the tree homes of the local wildlife.

The Titus Pond Conservation Area wraps around Titus Pond with some trails, and is a historic part of South Hadley, home to geese and other pond life, and is right next to the senior center.

You can stand on a dock look-



Submitted photo

**From turtles to flowers to snakes to squirrels to even a bobcat, there are many animals that share our town with us.**

ing out over the pond, the water easy to see through and teaming with life all through the spring and summer as dragonflies and ducks and geese visit.

The Carver-Newton-Jones Conservation area is located just behind the Ledges Golf Course and private farm land, but provides a wonderful space to explore along the Connecticut River, the perfect place to capture the best fall photos.

Buttery Brook Park, which we all know and love, closest to the Chicopee boarder is going through some construction and changes, and is looking to expand its accessibility to its trails and playground in the coming year.

With all these conservation areas, it requires hard work to manage the 1,000 acres of land, and there are Volunteer Conservation Corp Work Days, where volunteers can come to help and tend to these protected areas that help serve to make our town so beautiful.

There is a special newsletter that goes out, called Conservation Connections, where you can learn more about the nature and wildlife found within South Hadley.

South Hadley is wonderful

to see during all parts the year and through all seasons, with the trees standing tall through it all, and in the winter, the sounds of lightning cracking over the frozen waters of the Connecticut River during a thunderstorm.

"The amount of wildlife in town would probably astonish people," said Cornell. "The elusive bobcat has been seen all the way down at Beachgrounds Park in the Falls up to the fields at the base of the Mount Holyoke Range. They use the farm fields and waterways along Alvord St and the CT River as a greenway to navigate across their hunting territory."

"A trail camera installed at Black Stevens Conservation Area and has caught the following over the last year: a coyote with kits, red fox, deer, raccoon, opossum, porcupine, and of course squirrel. All of these in close proximity to two major roads and numerous residential neighborhoods. It's fascinating to know we all coexist in this little community."

There is so much to explore in this town we call home, with all of its wonders of nature, both great and small, both mighty and meek, and in the trees and ponds.

## CHIEF from page 1

think their government can help them," said Gunderson. "People appreciate us hearing their suggestions. These office hours really allowed me to be there in the community."

**"I want the community to know our officers are highly trained, and we have great officers, and that is because the town has given us the tools to be successful."**

– Chief Jennifer Gunderson

Many people utilize these office hours to stop in and chat with Gunderson, and don't miss a single one to spend time discussing ways to make the community a better place.

"Engagement from the community and how the community rallies to support one another is my favorite part of South Hadley," said Gunderson. "People care about the happenings, and they want to be a part of it all."

She highlighted many different times when the community stepped up, including working to support the senior center during their annual sales, and by working to keep Neighbors Helping Neighbors stocked with food and volunteers, and even the social media responses to name Comfort Dog Murphy.

"When I get a thank you, or read a report, or receive a call that an officer goes above and beyond- it makes me grateful to

be a part of the South Hadley community and in the police department, and I'm appreciative when officers take that step to be there for the community," said Gunderson.

Gunderson shared a story of one such moment when

Officer David Pratt answered a call from a senior man who needed help with the heat in his home and the landlord wouldn't answer. Pratt went to the man's home and fixed the circuit breaker problem.

"I hear often, especially from seniors, who have

been victims of fraud, that they didn't want to bother the police," Gunderson said. "My response to that is we are here 24/7, 365. Just making us aware allows us to be able to help."

"I want the community to know our officers are highly trained, and we have great officers, and that is because the town has given us the tools to be successful."

You can find Chief Gunderson at the next office hours at the Council on Aging where she will be with School Resource Officer Josh Helms to answer questions on Thursday, Jan. 23 from 5 to 6:45 p.m.

The South Hadley Police department is truly dedicated to this town and all members of the community, and work hard to ensure we can all have a safe and happy experience wherever they go, whether driving or walking, shopping or resting at home.

CHECK OUT ALL THE

**Turley** Publications

www.newspapers.turley.com

## ► Region

# Local firefighters graduate from Mass. Firefighting Academy

STOW – State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy leadership announced the graduation of 20 new firefighters from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

The graduating firefighters of Class #S39 represent the fire departments of Amherst, Chicopee, Dalton, Monson, Northampton, Palmer, Pittsfield, South Hadley Fire District 1, Springfield, Ware and Westfield.

The Richard N. Bangs Outstanding Student Award, which is presented to one recruit in each graduating career recruit training class, was presented to Firefighter Dylan Slich of Springfield Fire & Emergency Services. The award is named for the longtime chair of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and reflects the recruit's academic and practical skills, testing, and evaluations over the course of the 10-week program.

"Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today's graduates are needed now more than ever," said Davine. "The hundreds of hours of foundational training they've received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely."

"Massachusetts Firefighting Academy instructors draw on decades of experience in the fire service to train new recruits,"

said Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Deputy Director Dennis A. Ball. "Through consistent classroom instruction and practical exercises, today's graduates have developed the tools they'll need to work seamlessly with veteran firefighters in their home departments and in neighboring communities as mutual aid."

### Basic firefighter skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then during controlled fire conditions.

To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires.

Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, and are certified to the levels of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

### More than fighting fires

Modern firefighters train for and respond to all types of hazards and emergencies. They are

the first ones called to respond to chemical and environmental emergencies, ranging from the suspected presence of carbon monoxide to gas leaks to industrial chemical spills.

They may be called to rescue a child who has fallen through the ice, an office worker stuck in an elevator, or a motorist trapped in a crashed vehicle. They test and maintain their equipment, including self-contained breathing apparatus, hydrants, hoses, power tools and apparatus.

At the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, recruits learn all these skills and more, including the latest science of fire behavior and suppression tactics, from certified fire instructors. They also receive training in public fire education, hazardous material incident mitigation, flammable liquids, stress management and self-rescue techniques.

The intensive, 10-week program involves classroom instruction, physical fitness training, firefighter skills training, and live firefighting practice.

The MFA provides recruit and in-service training for career, call, and volunteer firefighters at every level of experience, from recruit to chief officer. Courses are delivered at MFA campuses in Stow, Springfield and Bridgewater, as well as on-site at local fire departments.



## Wistariahurst to offer kid art classes

HOLYOKE— Every first Sunday of the month from 2 to 4 p.m. Wistariahurst will be hosting kid art classes, starting Feb. 2.

This series of art classes is geared towards children in grades K-12 to spark creativity and inspire a love for art history. Joycelin Raho, the talented instructor guiding these classes, will help children explore different mediums and artistic techniques to unlock their imaginations. These engaging activities will help kids create their own masterpieces through a hands-on approach to learning.

To make these classes accessible and available for all kids in the community, Wistariahurst offers a sliding scale for admission. Parents and/or guardians can choose admission pricing from \$10, \$15, or \$20, which will help cover the cost of materials and ensure a rewarding experience for everyone who participates. Go to one class or go to all to get

the most out of these sessions: Feb. 2: Mixed media collage inspiration by artist Romare Bearden; March 2: Color, Pattern and building a mural using inspiration by artist Yayoi Kusama; April 6: Art with Recycled Materials and found objects (Earth Day inspired); May 4: Exploring Still Life drawing with pastels inspiration by artist Georgia O'Keeffe; June 1: Drawing from Nature Outdoors inspiration by artist Claude Monet.

If a child has an art appreciation, a desire to learn a new skill, or wants to try something new, Wistariahurst Kid's Art Classes are a fantastic way for them to explore, discover, and engage. Don't hesitate to join the fun! Visit the Eventbrite to learn more and sign up for these amazing classes.

To learn more, visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wistariahurst-kids-art-classes-tickets-1104573572289?aff=oddtcreator>

## Sen. Markey celebrates passage of Social Security Fairness Act

WASHINGTON— Sen. Edward J. Markey, Chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security, released the following statement after the Senate voted to pass the Social Security Fairness Act, legislation which would restore full Social Security benefits for nearly three million retired public servants.

"Last night, Congress passed the Social Security Fairness Act. Once signed by the president, we will finally repeal the Draconian laws that robbed an entire generation of teachers, firefighters, post-

al workers, and public servants of all stripes of the benefits they earned. By passing the Social Security Fairness Act, we will right this historic wrong; restore Social Security benefits to millions of Americans, including 130,000 in Massachusetts, and finally deliver for the workers who have delivered for their communities. To the nearly 3 million public servants and their families who will finally receive the retirement benefits they deserve: thank you for your service to your communities and your unwavering advocacy. I will always fight for public servants and retirees."

The Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset reduce the Social Security benefits of public servants and their surviving family members who receive a public pension. Those impacted paid into Social Security but are unable to receive the full benefits they earned. The Social Security Fairness Act would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset, which currently impact nearly 3 million public servants. Following passage in the House, the bill passed the Senate with a vote of 76-20.

## NAMI to host annual meeting on Jan. 19

HOLYOKE— The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts annual meeting will be held on Sunday, Jan. 19, beginning at 1 p.m. The special guest speaker will be Cristianna Borelli. Recently, she was invited to and competed at the National US/Woman of Achievement Pageant in Irvine, California this past November. She returned home with the national title of Ms US 2025, the first woman from New England to do so in the 10-year history

of the pageant. She will present her dual platform of mental health advocacy, and suicide prevention to help, support, and empower people from all walks of life who have struggled with a mental health issue. Now, she is using her crown as a symbol and a tool to help others who struggle in silence regarding their mental health. Hear her inspiring words of hope.

This event is open to the public. Absentee ballots will be mailed only to NAMI-WM

members who are eligible to vote. If the ballot has not been received by Jan. 13 please call the office. The ballots must be received in the office by Friday, Jan. 17. To register please go to [namiwm.org/events](http://namiwm.org/events) and click on the registration link or go directly to [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com) and search for NAMI Western Mass. A Zoom link will be provided to those who are registered. For more information contact the office.

## Murder mystery dinner

BELCHERTOWN— The Belchertown Historical Association is holding its annual murder mystery dinner on Saturday, Feb. 1 at Tony and Penny's Restaurant in Ludlow. The show will begin at 6 p.m., followed by the dinner buffet at 6:30 p.m. Guests can arrive as early as 5:30 p.m.

This year's show, written by Paula Hilton, is entitled Pirates, Lies and Mail-order brides. Look forward to the hilarious antics of the BUCC Players from the Belchertown United Church of Christ, as they portray Red Leg the Dreaded and his trusty side-kick Pillage Ann

Freebooty and others characters in this fun look at pirates who have left the glamorous life of pirating and joined the real world in real world jobs.

Plan a night out of dinner and entertainment while supporting our historical association, the church and a local restaurant business. The tickets are \$47 and include the show, dinner and dessert. There will be a cash bar. Tickets are available at Cold Spring Discount Liquors (on the Belchertown Common) or by contacting Sally Shattuck 413-230-2022 or [sallyshattuck54@gmail.com](mailto:sallyshattuck54@gmail.com).

## Traditional Irish night

HOLYOKE—The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties invite the public to attend the Traditional Irish night in Holyoke, at the Log Cabin on Saturday Feb. 22. There will be valet parking. Tickets are only \$50 per person. Call Joe O'Connor at 413-627-7148 or Fran Hennessey at 413-785-5687 by Feb. 18 or go

online to [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com). The event will feature the Keohane and Kenneally Irish American Band and a Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner with Ribs by Mick Corduff executive chef at the Log Cabin. The event was sold out the past 2 years so get tickets early. The Hibernians wish a Happy St. Patrick's Day to all.





78 Chorus singers: JaNiyah, Addie, and Taytum, with Carlos visible in the second row.



78 Rock & Soul Revue Jade, Brayden, AJ, Aaron, and Jaliyah letting out their voices together.

**MUSIC** from page 1

by Cavallin's favorite part is "just watching our students grow as artists and human beings."

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

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

"The PVPA Music Showcase is a biannual event (Winter and Spring) that showcases the work of our non-auditioned and auditioned performance ensembles across two nights," said Cavallin.

"The first night is for our non-auditioned performance classes, and our auditioned ensembles take the stage on the second night."

The showcase features the work the students have completed through the semester, with the work of the fall being shared at the winter showcase. The performance classes help students prepare for these showcases at the start of each semester.

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

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

Students from 7th through 12th grade perform during the showcase, sharing their talents and passions for music and



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



The talented singers letting out their voices during Adagio's performance.

the instruments they play, creating new and exciting ways to have fun playing.

"To me the most inspiring thing is to watch their growth through the years, from being very shy and scared to perform... they eventually transform into

confident, assertive, bold and uniquely individual musicians and human beings that are not afraid of stretching themselves beyond their comfort zones for the purpose of personal and artistic growth," said Cavallin.

**MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 20.**

PVPA works hard to help students identify their innate talents, providing them with the tools they need in order to expand their knowledge and artistry.

"We strive to create spaces where anyone who wishes to learn and be challenged through the art and craft of music making is welcome, whether they've been studying music for 10 years or 10 minutes," said Cavallin.

The school show's its dedication to its students, and it truly showed in the Winter Showcase last weekend.

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

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School is a free public charter school enrolling students in grades 7 through 12 and offers a college preparatory curriculum with a focus on broad exposure to the performing arts.

The school is accepting applications for the 2025/2026 school year, and you can find more information as well as application deadlines at [www.pvpa.org/admissions](http://www.pvpa.org/admissions).

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## Tigers take second straight against Orioles



Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande  
**Jack Loughrey** flies for the layup.

By Tim Peterson  
*Sports Correspondent*

SOUTH HADLEY — Jes Hambley scored a total of 2,069 points during the five years that she was a member of the South Hadley girls' varsity basketball team. Hambley graduated from South Hadley High School in 1999 and is still the school's all-time leading scorer.

Her nephew, Noah Hambley is a sophomore starting guard on this year's South Hadley boys' varsity hoop team. He scored a game-high 25 points with the help of six 3-pointers which

led the Tigers to a 71-48 victory over Bi-County East league rival Belchertown at Thomas B. Landers Court, last Wednesday night.

"My aunt wasn't here tonight, but she usually comes to my games," said Noah Hambley, who joined the varsity squad as a freshman. "It's very special following in her footsteps and I'm hoping to join her on the 1,000th point banner in the future."

Overall, the Tigers (6-2, 5-1) made a total of 15 3-pointers in the home victory over the Orioles.

South Hadley began the

2024-25 regular season with a 59-52 road victory at Belchertown (4-3, 3-3) on December 12.

"We only beat Belchertown by seven points in the season opener, so we knew that tonight's game would probably be another close game," Hambley said. "The difference was our defense, which has been spectacular all season long. We just want to keep improving in every game that we play."

The Tigers held the Orioles to only six points in the opening quarter, which helped them build a 15-point lead and they never looked back after that.

Hambley, who scored eight points in the season opening win versus the Orioles, is one of the Tigers three sophomore starters.

"Noah is an unselfish basketball player," said South Hadley boys' varsity coach Chris Gerber. "He normally distributes the ball, but it was his night to score some points. I'm very happy for him."

South Hadley's other two sophomore starters are Jackson Driver, who's a guard, and Tim Loughrey, who's a forward. The duo also made key contributions



**Jackson Driver** picks up a loose ball.

Please see **TIGERS**, page 19

## Granby falls at home to Monson

By Tim Peterson  
*Sports Correspondent*

GRANBY—After losing the first four games of the regular season by more than 10 points, the members of the Monson girls basketball team finally celebrated a victory.

The young Lady Mustangs, who only have one senior listed on their roster, overcame an eight-point deficit to defeat Granby, 44-40, in a non-league game held at Sullivan Gymnasium, last Tuesday night.

"The kids have been very working hard, and it feels great to finally get a win. They really deserve it," said first-year Monson head coach Alyssa Darling. "We did trail for most of the game, but we never gave up."

Darling was a 1,000-point scorer during her outstanding high school basketball career at Palmer High School. She was also a member of the women's basketball team at Westfield State University.

A couple of years ago, Darling won ten games in her first stint as a girls' varsity basketball

Please see **GRANBY**, page 11

## Middle weights hurt Tigers in loss



**Brock Dufault** goes for the pinfall at 132 pounds.



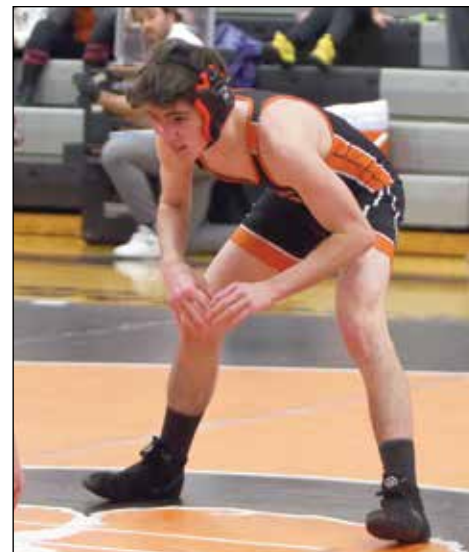
**Darius Gelinias** holds the advantage after a takedown.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



**Eli Yakovlev** gets ready to lock up at 165 pounds.

SOUTH HADLEY — Mahar won several matches in the middle weights and rode that momentum to a 54-30 win over South Hadley in a dual meet last Tuesday evening. Among the Tigers that did score wins were Patrick Lavelle, Brock Dufault, Eli Yakovlev, Darius Gelinias, and Roberto Melendez. The Tigers participated in the Quabbin Duals last weekend and faced Granby on Jan. 16. Next, the Tigers travel to Frontier Regional on Jan. 22 at 7 p.m.



**PJ Lavelle** begins a match at 120 pounds.

## T-Birds reach .500 with road win

HARTFORD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (15-15-2-1) rode spectacular performances by Simon Robertsson and Colten Ellis to a 3-1 win over the Hartford Wolf Pack (16-16-2-1) on Sunday inside the XL Center.

The opening period yielded a scarce amount of chances for the two squads, as Ellis and Dylan Garand were each a perfect 8-for-8 in save opportunities. Dalibor Dvorsky came the closest of the two teams to breaking the scoreless tie when he wristed a forehand off the post on the stick side.

The Wolf Pack, which scored only once in their last three games on home ice, broke the ice at 3:37 of the second as Ryder Korczak cashed a 3-on-2 rush with his third of the season to give the visitors a 1-0 advantage. That Hartford lead lasted less than three minutes as Robertsson evened the slate at 6:20 with a backhand rebound after Garand denied an initial shot from Corey Schueneman.

With the 1-1 score carrying into the period's final minute, Springfield got a tie-breaking goal from a rookie for the second straight evening. Robertsson was

nearing the end of a shift but gutted it out with an incredible individual effort to split between two Wolf Pack defenseman before drubbing a forehand shot through Garand's legs at 19:08.

The rookie's first career multi-goal game in the AHL gave the T-Birds the 2-1 lead heading into the third.

Ellis was the star of the show in a final period that saw the Wolf Pack relentlessly attack the Springfield goal. Time after time, the young backstop had an answer, racking up 19 third period saves, with a little help from his post along the way on a near-tying goal from Jaroslav Chmelar.

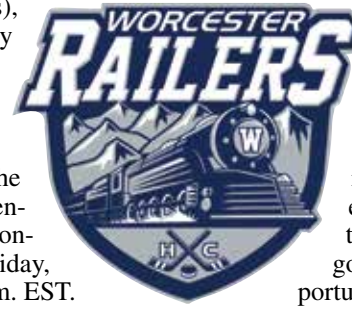
With Garand at the bench with just under two minutes remaining, Hugh McGing darted up the ice to cancel an icing and pound a loose puck into an empty net to end a 29-game goal-scoring drought.

With four points in their pockets out of the weekend, the T-Birds look to build on their momentum on Wednesday night as they make their first visit to Bridgeport to take on the Islanders at 7 p.m. at Total Mortgage Arena.



## Railers scored win over Wheeling Nailers

WORCESTER — The Worcester Railers HC (14-17-1-4 33pts) took down the Wheeling Nailers (25-7-2-0, 52pts), on Sunday afternoon by the final score of 2-1 in front of a crowd of 1,875 at Wes-Banco Arena. The Railers are back on the ice next at the DCU Center taking on the Adirondack Thunder on Friday, January 17th at 7:05 p.m. EST.



It was the Railers who struck first tonight as Justin Gill (1-1-2) scored 10:18 into the first period giving Worcester the 1-0 lead. The Railers extended their lead to 2-0 in the second period with a goal from Anthony Callin (1-0-1). Wheeling notched their first goal of the night 40 seconds into the third period as Logan Pietila (1-0-1) cut the Wheeling deficit to one. The Railers held off Wheeling for the remainder of the third period, leading to a 2-1 final score.

Worcester logged the first goal of the night as Justin Gill (3rd) scored on a wraparound goal 10:18 into the first period giving Worcester the 1-0

lead. Gill would be the only goal scorer through the first 20 minutes. Shots favored Wichita 13-9 in the first period.

Worcester extended their lead in the second period when Anthony Callin (9th) tapped Justin Gill's pass into the back of the net extended the Worcester lead to 2-0. Wheeling got the first power play opportunity of the game following a slashing call on Worcester's Anthony Repaci, but the Railers penalty kill successfully killed the penalty off and kept the score at 2-0 heading into the third period. Shots favored Worcester in the second 17-10.

It didn't take long in the third period for Wheeling to cut into the Worcester lead, as Logan Pietila (4th) scored just 40 seconds into the third period. The Railers held Wheeling off the scoreboard for the remainder of the third period, including a late barrage of shots in which Michael Bullion made a flurry of saves to give Worcester the 2-1 win in regulation. Shots favored Wheeling in the third 11-3 and 34-29 in the game.

### GRANBY from page 10

coach at Minnechaug Regional.

One of the eight Lady Mustangs players is senior Olivia Chrzan, who's also a member of the elite 1,000-point club. Chrzan scored a game-high 30 points against Granby (3-4). It pushed her career point total over the 1,700 mark. Chrzan has also scored 140 points in the seven basketball games that she has played against Granby.

"It's a coach's dream to coach a basketball player like Olivia," said Darling, who also had the opportunity to coach Chrzan at the youth level. "The things that she does on the court is just amazing. She's a great kid, a great teammate, and is very coachable. We're hoping that she can reach 2,000 career points this season. She's just an amazing athlete."

The Lady Rams were led offensively by Kalli White, who's one of the Lady Rams three sophomore starters. White finished the home contest with 27 points. Sophomore Brenna Moreno scored six points and senior Autumn Sicard added five points. Junior Kaitlyn Curran only scored two points, but she guarded Chrzan which isn't a very easy task.

"We're a young basketball team and the players are still learning a new system," said first-year Granby head coach Dave Padavano. "I really enjoy coaching the Granby girls' team. All of the players are great kids and I'm hoping they have a good experience playing basketball. This would've been a very big home win for us."

Padavano is a veteran varsity basketball coach. He began his coaching career as the boys' varsity coach at Millbury High School before switching over to the girls' side. Before coming to Granby High School, Padavano was also the girls' varsity coach at Pope Francis, Leicester High School, Ashland High School, and at Sizer (Fitchburg).

"I saw an ad online that Granby was looking for a girls' varsity basketball coach, so I decided to apply for the position," Padavano said. "At the start of my coaching career, I never planned on coaching a girls' team, but then the coaching position at Pope Francis opened. I just love coaching the girls."

With 2:59 remaining in the fourth quarter, Chrzan made a pair of free throws which tied the score at 38-38 for the third time in the game. She then made a putback hoop with 2:10 left giving her team the lead for the first time since the score was 2-0 Monson.

Following a Chrzan putback basket,



**Kalli White wants to shoot with lot of pressure.**

an inside hoop by freshman Grace Berry, which were her only points, increased the Lady Mustangs lead to 42-38 with 1:40 left on the scoreboard clock.

Then freshman Emma Bannon (3 points) made a foul shot giving the visiting team a five point lead with 30 seconds left.

"We did have a couple of other players step up offensively during the fourth quarter. We also played well defensively, which also helped us," Darling said. "It was a very exciting comeback win for us."

A White lay-up closed the gap to three points with 23.5 left in regulation, but Chrzan was fouled in the final seconds. She made a foul shot enabling the Lady Mustangs to celebrate their first victory of the 2024-25 regular season.

The other scorers in the road victory for Monson, who don't have a j.v. team, were freshman Cali Zielinski (4 points), freshman Madigan Graves-Harrison (3 points), and eighth grader Mila Hudak (2 points).

Granby pretty much controlled the first three quarters of the game.

White scored 14 points during the first eight minutes of the contest which helped the Lady Rams build a 19-11 lead.

Granby's other five points during the first quarter were a jumper in the paint by Moreno (6 points) and a 3-pointer from Sicard, who scored all her points before halftime.



**Brenna Moreno takes the short jump shot.**



**Kaitlyn Curran looks to pass around the defense.**

With 1:25 remaining in the first half, Moreno made a lay-up giving the Lady Rams a 25-17 advantage.

Zielinski closed out the half with a jumper cutting Monson's deficit to six



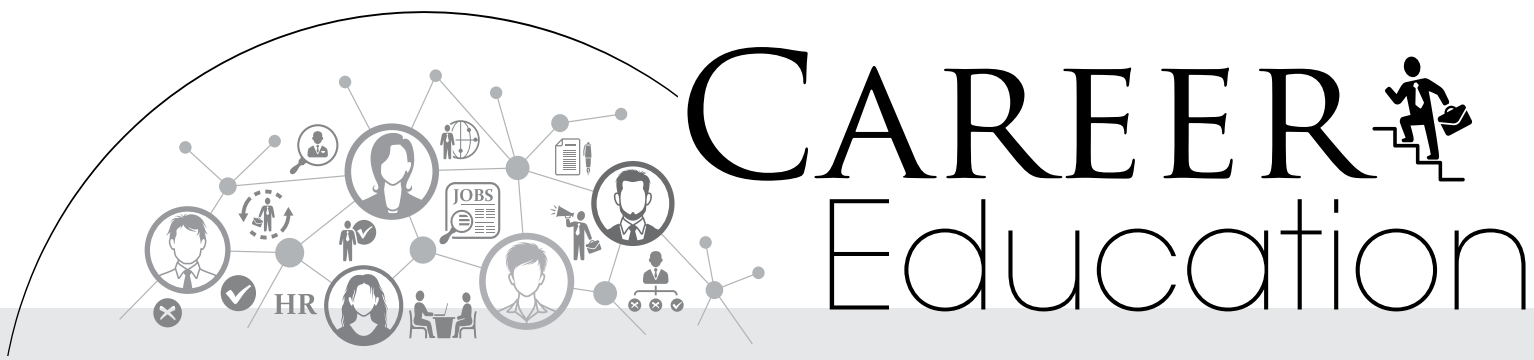
**Autumn Sicard dribbles around the traffic.**



**Eleanor Szlosek looks to bring in a rebound.**

points at the break.

The third quarter was evenly played. The home team entered the final quarter of the game holding a 34-27 lead which they let slip away from them.



## Hampden Charter School of Science: Empowering Students for a Brighter Future

Are you searching for a school where academic excellence meets a supportive community? Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) is a top-ranked, tuition-free public charter school serving grades 6-12 in Western Massachusetts. Since its founding in 2009, HCSS has been dedicated to preparing students for college, careers, and a lifetime of success.

### Why Choose HCSS?

HCSS stands out as a premier choice for families because of its unique combination of academic rigor, personalized attention, and community spirit. Our two campuses—the Middle School in West Springfield (Grades 6-8) and the High School in Chicopee (Grades 9-12)—offer students a seamless transition from middle school to high school and beyond. Here's what makes HCSS truly exceptional:

**Academic Excellence:** Our rigorous curriculum is guided by College Board AP standards and Common Core. With honors courses beginning in 7th grade, 14 AP offerings in high school, and innovative programs like Project Lead The Way

(PLTW), students are challenged to reach their full potential.

**Comprehensive College and Career Preparation:** HCSS begins college and career readiness as early as 6th grade, including early SAT/PSAT prep, dual enrollment opportunities, and experiential college campus visits. With a 100% college acceptance rate and over \$51M in scholarships awarded since 2013, our graduates are set for success.

**State-of-the-Art Technology:** Students benefit from one-to-one Chromebook access, SMART Interactive Displays, and hands-on science labs, preparing them for a tech-driven world.

**Award-Winning Extracurriculars:** From robotics and science clubs to competitive athletics and social activities, students thrive outside the classroom as well.

### Join Us for an Open House!

Explore what HCSS has to offer during our upcoming Welcome Saturday Open House events! Meet our dedicated staff, tour our campuses, and learn how HCSS can help your child achieve their dreams. Interested families can also join

a Virtual Information Session for an in-depth look at our programs from the comfort of home.

### What Parents and Students Love About HCSS

Parents and students consistently praise HCSS for its nurturing environment, where every student feels valued and supported. The school's commitment to diversity and inclusion fosters a vibrant community that celebrates different perspectives and cultures. Families also appreciate the convenience of free transportation and extensive tutoring services, ensuring all students have the tools they need to succeed.

### Student Success Stories

HCSS alumni have gone on to attend prestigious universities, including Ivy League institutions like Harvard, Columbia, and Dartmouth. Our students' achievements are a testament to the school's dedication to academic and personal growth. With a consistent college matriculation rate of over 95%, HCSS prepares students not just to attend col-

lege but to excel once they get there.

### How to Apply

Applications for the 2025-2026 school year are now open! Rising 6th-10th graders should apply no later than March 2, 2025, to secure a spot in our admission lottery. Visit [www.hampdencharter.org](http://www.hampdencharter.org) to apply and take the first step toward a brighter future.

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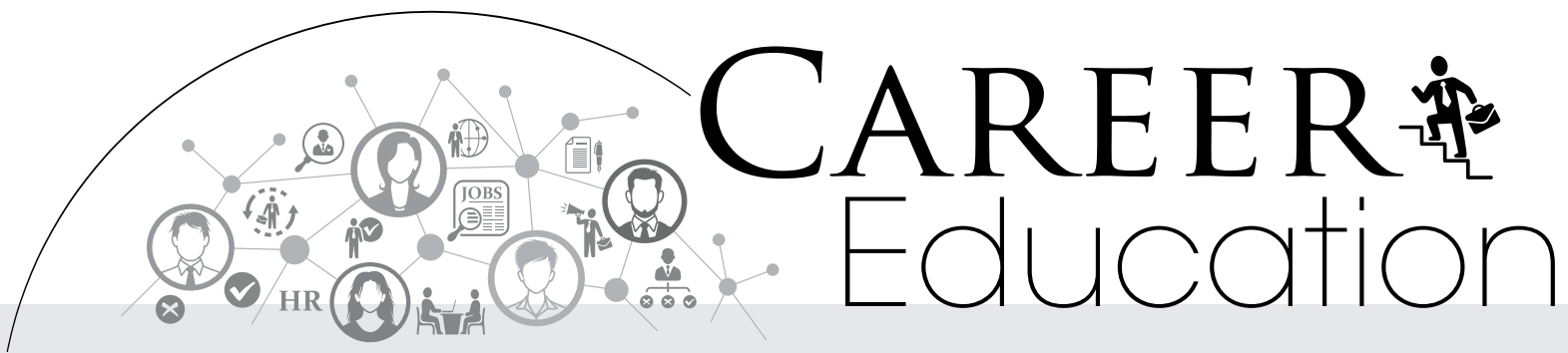
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## GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT INVITES YOU TO JOIN US! [WWW.GRSD.ORG](http://WWW.GRSD.ORG)



Nestled in the foothills of the Berkshires, Gateway Regional School District offers a caring and supportive small school environment. With support from the Barr Foundation, Gateway is engaging in transformative work to reinvent the school experience to make learning joyful for every student. Each GRSD school has a focus that aligns with the district's vision of emphasizing real-world learning, collaboration, and innovation.

**Littleville Elementary School** incorporates engaging, hands-on projects and events:

- Hartford Wolf Pack School Learning Day
- Springfield Symphony Orchestra string instrument workshop
- Holiday Craft fair
- Interactive "Author's Experience" with writer Daryl Cobb.


**Gateway Regional School's** (grades 6-12) pilot program will equip student for success after high school through:

- Fun team-building activities
- College tours
- Career exploration with experts
- Life-skills workshops
- Community projects



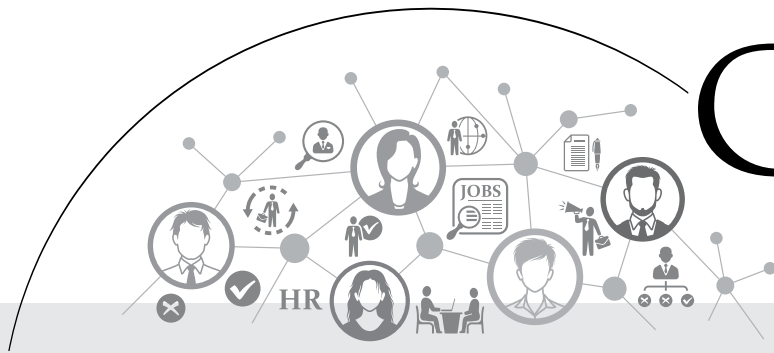

**Chester Elementary School** focuses on sustainability, creativity, and environmental awareness:

- Teaching with Trout (raising brook trout from eggs to adulthood)
- School-wide composting initiative
- Student Media Club
- School-wide production of Willy Wonka Jr.
- Visit from the Whalemobile





**WE ARE EXCITED TO MEET YOU!**



# CAREER Education

## Gateway Raises the Bar(r) for Students

The Gateway Regional School District is making significant advancements in student engagement and staff development, thanks to funding from the Barr Foundation and enthusiastic commitment from students and staff. These funds are being used to support a variety of initiatives that align with the district's instructional vision, emphasizing real-world learning, collaboration, and innovation.

At Gateway Regional, a comprehensive plan has been developed for grades 6-12 to help students prepare for life beyond high school. This plan includes tailored learning experiences for each grade level, such as team-building activities for sixth graders, community exploration in seventh grade, and visits to community colleges for eighth graders. Ninth-grade students will engage in career exploration workshops led by industry experts, while tenth graders will visit four-year colleges. Eleventh-grade students will attend a local college fair and participate in life skills workshops, and seniors will celebrate their achievements with a banquet and lead activities for younger students. While some of these initiatives will be piloted this year, others will launch in the next school year, ensuring students are equipped with knowledge and skills for future success. The high school offers two Chapter 74 programs for students interested in welding and early childhood education. Graduates of these programs will complete a full comprehensive internship and be equipped to enter the workforce with the skills obtained.

Littleville Elementary is incorporating the Barr Foundation funds into engaging, hands-on projects and school-wide events. For example, students in grades three through five recently attended the Hartford Wolf Pack School Learning Day, where they applied physical science concepts like force and motion to a live hockey game. Kindergarten students participated in a String Instrument Workshop led by members of the Springfield Orchestra, while all grade levels are eagerly anticipating an interactive "Author's Experience" with writer Daryl Cobb in March.

Plans are in the works to create a Schoolyard Habitat for Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Littleville is also planning a mentoring program that will pair high school students with elementary students for long-term support. The school recently hosted a successful Holiday Craft Fair, showcasing student-made goods and fostering creativity.

At Chester Elementary, the focus is on sustainability, creativity, and environmental awareness. For the third year in a row, students are engaged with hydroponic agriculture, growing healthy food for their own school lunches and community. Students are participating in the Teaching with Trout program, where they raise brook trout from eggs to adulthood while learning about ecology and conservation. A composting initiative led by fifth graders is teaching students how to sort waste and reduce their environmental impact. The Student Media Club provides third graders with opportunities to develop and produce their own videos, promoting teamwork and innovation. Chester is also preparing for a school-wide production of Willy Wonka Jr., with fifth graders in lead roles and younger students in supporting roles. Additionally, an in-school field trip featured the Whalemobile, a life-sized inflatable whale that taught students about marine biology and conservation.

District-wide, the Barr Foundation funds are also being used to enhance staff development and collaboration. Teachers are participating in study tours to locations such as Kentucky, Maine, Providence, Boston, and New York City to explore innovative educational practices. An internal instructional vision board encourages staff members to share ideas for projects that utilize the funds to further educational transformation.

Through these initiatives, the Gateway Regional School District is fostering creativity, collaboration, and real-world learning for students while empowering educators with new ideas and strategies. These efforts are preparing students for success both in school and beyond while creating a culture of innovation and engagement throughout the district.

## A New Year a New Career

A new year is upon us and as we declare resolutions, a new job might be in order. The first 5 years of a child's life are so important and since 1965, HCS Head Start has helped thousands of children and families prepare for school and life. We know that it takes a big heart to help shape growing minds and if you want to work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in your community, Head Start might be the place for you.

The Head Start approach offers both families and their children, birth to five, an extraordinary school readiness experience. Educators who decide to teach in a comprehensive early learning setting have the opportunity to work collaboratively with other specialty areas like health, nutrition, mental health, and family and community engagement, that are designed to prepare vulnerable children for future educational success.

Data shows that when children are enrolled in a high-quality Head Start

program they are better prepared for kindergarten and beyond. Staff and parents work together, learning from one another, to create the best early educational experience both at home and at preschool. This is possible because when parents are involved and engaged in their child's education, children have better outcomes.

In addition to teaching, Head Start also has various career opportunities in the areas of health, nutrition, human services, administration, mental health, and special education. Professional development opportunities and career ladders are built within the Head Start model to promote growth and advancement.

Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc. offers programs in several cities and towns in Western Massachusetts working with over 1,000 children each year. If you are interested in a rewarding Head Start career please visit [www.hcsheadstart.org/employment/](http://www.hcsheadstart.org/employment/) or call 413-788-6522.

## HCS Head Start is Hiring

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## HCC gearing up for spring semester

Registration is open for spring 2025 semester classes at Holyoke Community College.

The HCC spring 2025 semester begins Tuesday, Jan. 21, for full 15-week spring semester classes begin. HCC will also be running three accelerated spring flex start sessions: Flex Start I classes begin Jan. 21 and run for seven weeks; Flex Start II classes begin Monday, Feb. 3, and run for 12 weeks; Flex Start III classes begin Monday, March 24, and run for seven weeks.

Thanks to the state-funded MassEducate program, a community college education is now free for all Massachusetts residents who have yet to earn a bachelor's degree.

"MassEducate provides an exciting opportunity for eligible students to attend college without the concern or weight of how to pay for it," said Mark Hudgik, HCC dean of strategic recruitment initiatives, admissions, and financial aid. "There has never been a better time to enroll.

Eligible students who want to earn a certificate or degree need only to complete the standard HCC application, complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for the 2024-2025 school year, and register for at least six credits (typically two classes).

"Our admissions counselors, academic advisers, and financial aid staff are available to make sure prospective students get all the assistance they need," said Hudgik.

Class schedules and information about MassEducate can be found on the HCC website: [hcc.edu](http://hcc.edu).

Enroll today [hcc.edu/admissions](http://hcc.edu/admissions).

## The MacDuffie School more than just a school, a community

At The MacDuffie School, we believe education is more than academics—it's the foundation for a lifetime of achievement. Our vibrant community fosters creativity, leadership, and excellence while instilling respect and integrity in everything we do.

At MacDuffie, you're not just a student—you're part of a community that celebrates your individuality and supports your growth. Our small class sizes and dedicated teachers ensure you're seen, heard, and challenged to reach your full potential. Here, students don't just prepare for college—they prepare for life.

Choosing the right school is a big decision. That's why we invite you to learn more about MacDuffie and how it can shape your future. Visit our website, schedule a tour, or attend our April 5th open house to see for yourself what makes us different.

Your journey starts here. Define your future at MacDuffie—apply today! [admissions@macduffie.org](mailto:admissions@macduffie.org)

## Come and see what's new at St. Joan of Arc School

Physical Education Teacher Larry Moore and SJA students are enjoying a new basketball hoop funded by generous donations from our Annual Campaign.

A schoolyard basketball hoop is so important in creating not only a healthy environment, but helps with critical thinking, resilience, perseverance & teamwork.

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation recently awarded St. Joan of Arc School a \$500 grant to support its youth literacy program. A Book Club was formed for third and fourth grade students to encourage reading and literacy at a young age. This Book Club helps our students gain a deeper understanding of their reading, of other people through conversations, and provides an opportunity to safely fail and celebrate success. The club meets monthly to discuss the book, work on a fun activity, and share their findings.

The school will be holding

an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 25 from 9 a.m. to noon (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 28 and Thursday, Jan. 30 from 3 to 7 p.m. Please call Chris or Janine in the Business Office at 413-276-4608 for registration information or to make an appointment.

St. Joan of Arc School is a welcoming, safe & secure school community providing social, physical, spiritual & intellectual wellness for students in Pre-K 3 to Grade 8. SJA has innovative offerings that include affordable tuition and extended care, free breakfast and lunch, extracurricular programs, technology, music, library, and Duolingo language classes. Easy access to I391 & I90. Financial Aid and tuition assistance is available. To learn more visit [www.sjachicopee.org](http://www.sjachicopee.org).

We look forward to meeting you!

**Explore Your Passions.  
Be a Leader.  
Choose MacDuffie.**



**OPEN HOUSE**  
Saturday, April 5, 2025 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



The MacDuffie School is a special place, and it all begins with our mission:  
*To foster in all students the intellectual habits of mind, high ethical standards, and respect for diversity required for becoming effective individuals in their personal and work lives, and moral and responsible participants in the world beyond.*

*There's no better way to get a feel for The MacDuffie School than spending time with us!*

Please register for our Open House at [www.macduffie.org](http://www.macduffie.org) or contact the Admissions Office at (413) 255-0000 to reserve your spot.

**Come Be A Part Of Our Community!**

66 School Street  
Granby, Massachusetts

[www.MacDuffie.org](http://www.MacDuffie.org)

For Students  
in Grades 6 through 12

### St. Joan of Arc School ~ Pre-K to Grade 8

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*Learning Rooted in Christian Values*

### OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, Jan 25th 9am-12 noon ~ No Appointment Needed

Jan 28th & Jan 30th 3pm-7pm ~ By Appointment Only



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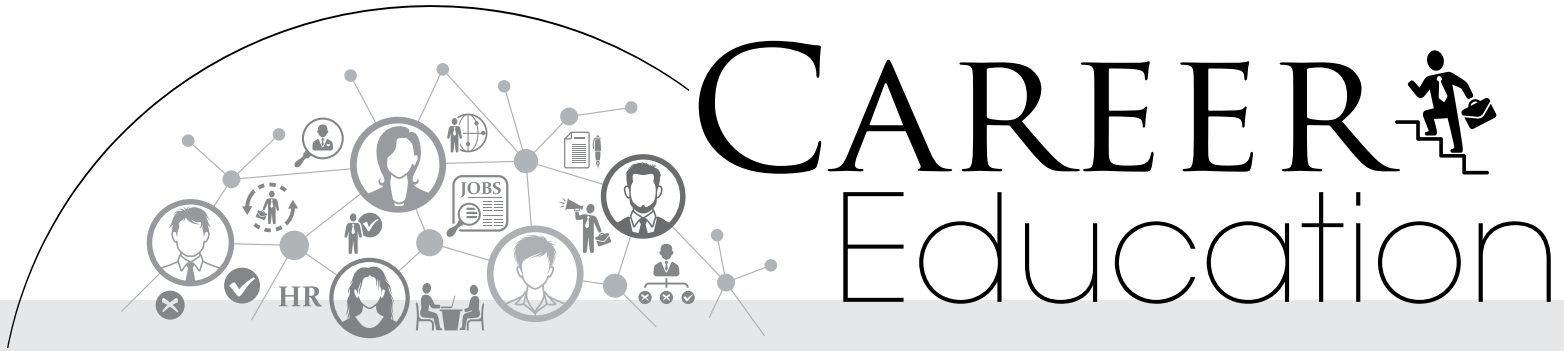
**Phys. E ~ Music ~ Library ~ Duolingo**

**Welcoming, Safe & Secure School Community**

**Social, Physical, Spiritual & Intellectual Wellness**

**Easy Access to I391 & I90 ~ Tuition Assistance Available**





# CAREER Education

## Come and see what great things are happening at St. Stanislaus School in Chicopee

This year the school's theme is "Many Gifts, One Spirit", which is our belief that every student has gifts to share with others towards the goal of making our world a better place. Our school encourages our students to focus on a different Corporal Work of Mercy to help our greater community. Some of the outreach programs we have participated in this year were: collection of canned goods for Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, for which our students collected 3,800 canned goods; and recently we collected toiletries, diapers, and other personal items to support the wish lists of both The Gray House and Christina's House in Springfield. The Works of Mercy which have been covered are – Feeding the Hungry and Working for Peace.

Service projects are done throughout the year to help teach students the value of giving back.

The school will be holding an Open House on Sunday, Feb. 2 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. (no appointment needed). If you would like to schedule a private tour for

another time, please call the school to schedule an appointment at (413) 592-5135.

St. Stanislaus School is a Roman Catholic, Franciscan, co-educational Pre-K through 8th grade school. Students are assisted in developing their potential spiritually, physically, and socially within a safe and diverse community. A foundation of academic excellence is created to prepare students to become contributing members of a global society. The school has a welcoming Franciscan environment, modern air-conditioned facility, strong core curriculum, enrichment classes, certified faculty, full-day preschool (PreK3 & 4) and Kindergarten, free breakfast and hot lunch, before & after school program, and one to one use and integration of iPads & Chromebooks into curriculum. Financial Aid is available. Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us". To learn more please visit [www.saintstansschool.org](http://www.saintstansschool.org).

We can't wait to meet you!

## Join us at PVPA for an open house to see what we can offer your child

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA) has a 25+ year history of providing an excellent, arts-focused, college-prep education to students in Grades 7-12.

PVPA students thrive in an creative, challenging learning environment that offers them a broad exposure to the performing arts. Our students consistently show that incorporating the arts into education creates, not just better artists, but better students who are equipped to be active participants in their future.

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Join PVPA for an Open House and see why we are consistently voted one of the Best Charter Schools in the



Valley!

Now accepting applications for the 2025/2026 school year for Grades 7-12 at [pvpa.org/admissions](http://pvpa.org/admissions).



Visit us to learn more!  
To register for Open House, and TO APPLY:  
[www.pvpa.org/admissions](http://www.pvpa.org/admissions) or QR Code below



**OPEN HOUSE**  
Weds, Jan 15 4-6pm  
Sat, Jan 25 & Feb 1 10am-12pm  
Tues, Feb 18 10am-12pm

Free, Arts-focused, College-prep  
Grades 7-12  
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**Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School**  
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photo credit: Julian Parker-Burns

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Call us for more information and to schedule a tour. We welcome the opportunity for you to experience St. Stanislaus School! Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us."

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

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# Bonsignore will participate in Xfinity Series races in 2025

Joe Gibbs Racing announced today that four-time NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Champion Justin Bonsignore will drive the team's No. 19 Toyota GR Supra in five NASCAR Xfinity Series races in 2025.

Bonsignore made his Xfinity Series debut for JGR last June at New Hampshire Motor Speedway. Despite having no practice or qualifying laps, the Holtsville, New York, native found his way into the top five before contact on a late-race restart relegated him to a 22nd-place finish.

The 36-year-old driver is no stranger to success on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour. He has racked up 45 victories, 130 top-five finishes, 169 top-10s, 33 pole awards, and 5,442 laps led in 226 career starts. In 2024, Bonsignore posted five victories on the way to his fourth career championship. He has not finished lower than fourth in the final rankings in the past nine seasons.

"When we had the opportunity to work with the Joe Gibbs Racing team at New Hampshire last year, it was a perfect pairing," Bonsignore said. "As soon as that weekend was over, we started looking at options to run a larger schedule in 2025 and it all came together. When you work with a team like JGR, you know you're going to

have a car in contention to win every race you run. We're looking forward to having some fun and chasing trophies."

Bonsignore is looking to add his name to an impressive list of drivers who have won for the JGR Xfinity Series program. In the team's history, JGR owns 214 wins, including 10 in 2024. Since the team's inception, 23 different drivers have taken JGR to victory lane in the Xfinity Series, including 14 drivers who claimed their first career victory in the series driving for JGR. The organization has won four Xfinity Series driver championships and six owner's championships.

"We're excited to have Justin back in our car in 2025," said Steve de Souza, Executive Vice President of Xfinity Series and Development for JGR. "He has proven himself over and over again in the modifieds and he did a great job for us at New Hampshire with no track time before the race started. We're looking forward to seeing what he can do with more opportunities to adapt to the Xfinity cars and working with the same team multiple times this season."

The No. 19 team's full driver schedule will be announced at a later date.

## 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



Isiah James goes for the three-pointer.



Tim Loughrey looks to enter the arc.

### TIGERS from page 10

in last Wednesday's home contest.

Driver finished the game with 12 points after making four 3-pointers in the first half. Loughrey scored all eight of his points after halftime. He made a pair of 3-pointers and a lay-up.

"We have a total of six sophomores on the varsity team and three of them are starters," Gerber added. "They've been playing well, and this is a very big win for us."

Senior forward Jack Loughrey, who scored a game-high 29 points in the season opening victory, reached double digits with 13 points in the home game versus the Orioles.

"Our game plan was to try to stop (Jack) Loughrey from scoring and let the other guys beat us," said Belchertown first-year head Jim Hart said. "We didn't do a very good job of defending their other shooters."

Rounding out the scoring column for the Tigers were senior guard Connor Hall (3 points), junior guard Isiah James (8 points), and sophomore guard Noah Rivera (2 points).

It was the Orioles' first road game of the regular season.

"We played on the road for the first time this season and it was a different environment," Hart added. "We were outplayed in all aspects of the game."

The only two double digit scorers for the visiting team were junior guard Jacob Pacunas and junior forward Shea MacLean, who each scored 11 points. Senior guard Ian McDonald and sophomore forward Brice Letendre both scored seven points. The Orioles' other two scorers were senior guard Kyle Dunigan (5 points), and senior guard Kaden Czaporowski (3 points).

The Tigers raced out to an 8-0 lead less than three minutes into the contest with the help of 3-pointers from James and Driver, which were sandwiched around a Jack Loughrey base-line lay-up.

Late in the first quarter, Hambley knocked down a 3-pointer from the top of the key. He was then fouled while making a lay-up. He made the bonus free throw giving the Tigers a 19-6 lead.



Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande  
Noah Hambley shoots in coverage.

The Orioles only field goals during the first eight minutes of the contest were a Dunigan put-back hoop following a missed 3-pointer and two Pacunas lay-ups.

In the final seconds of the first quarter, Jack Loughrey made an inside basket giving the home team a 21-6 advantage entering the second stanza.

The Tigers held a 40-18 halftime lead after outscoring the Orioles, 25-12, during the second quarter.

In the middle of the third quarter, Hambley made three consecutive 3-pointers pushing the Tigers lead to 52-24.

South Hadley led by 32 points (71-39) in the fourth quarter before Belchertown scored the final nine points.

# Job Connection

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## Conservation Agent

### TOWN OF BLANDFORD

The Town of Blandford is seeking candidates for a part-time Conservation Agent. Candidates must have at least one year of experience in a similar role. The compensation for this 5-10 hour-a-week position is \$23.00-25.00 an hour.

A full job description with application guidelines can be found at [www.townofblandford.com/job-openings/](http://www.townofblandford.com/job-openings/)

**Closing date for all applications is Friday, January 31, 2025 by 12 noon. Open until filled.**

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



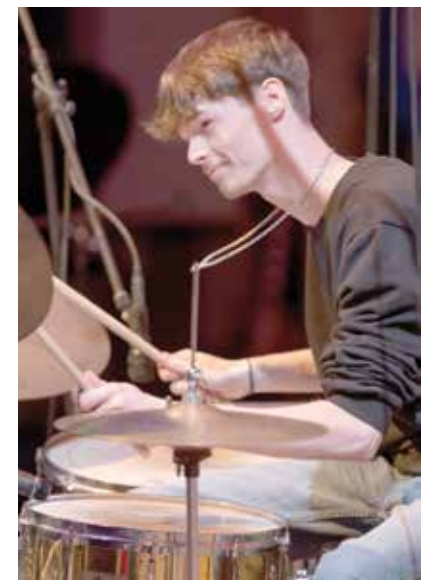
Makhi looking cool playing during the Pop R&B performance.



Will, Alex B., and Alex S. singing during Saturday's A Capella performance.



Charlie playing his heart out during the Pop R&B performance.



Chevy on the drums for Adagio's performance.

# Musical talent



Brayden P. on the piano playing during the MS Rock and Soul Revue performance.



Ryan facing the camera and playing during the Adagio set.



78 Concert Band musicians Ella, River, and Neveah on wind instruments.



Gig Band getting their groove on with the red lights on the stage.



LEFT: Shauntrell, a singer for Adagio, singing Billy Joel's "Vienna".

## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"After the loss of my wife, selling our home was an emotional experience. Maureen made the process not only manageable but comforting. Her kindness, attention to detail, and professionalism were extraordinary. Thanks to her dedication, the house sold quickly and smoothly. I will always be grateful for the care and compassion she and her broker, Paul Gallagher, showed during such a difficult time."

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