

# TOWN Reminder

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## Middle school proudly shares toys to help others

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

SOUTH HADLEY – Michael E. Smith Middle School hosted a special STEM presentation of the projects and hard work of the students in their STEM Program.

The STEM program has been in operation for the past three years, offering courses provided by Project Lead the Way, a nonprofit organization that offers hands-on, project-based STEM programs for grades 7-12. The program was introduced at MESMS by former principal Chris Fontaine.

STEM, an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, allows students in school to explore these topics. MEMS offers fifth-grade Flight and Space, sixth-grade Design and Modeling, and seventh-grade Robotics.

"I love the hands-on aspects of the program and the focus on problem-solving.

Students are given a task or a challenge, then need to develop a plan and build the model. This process leads to a lot of decision-making for the group and opportunities to develop their ability to try new things and persevere through challenges," said fifth-grade teacher Alan Gardner.

The showcase happened on Tuesday evening and featured all of the projects the students completed in school during class, and featured the focal project, which was to develop a therapeutic toy for a child with cerebral palsy with specific goals in mind, like wrist extension, pincer grasps, or another feature to help the child.

"The students worked together in small groups to design a toy and build a prototype that focuses on that specific skill. The prototypes should be functional as well as motivational for the selected child," explained Gardner.

Please see **TOYS**, page 9



Students showing off their interactive Taco station they made together.

Submitted photo

## PVPA Music Department presents: Chills + Thrills, a winter music showcase



Abigail Miller, Grade 11, and Miles Santanello, Grade 11.



Julian Garcia, Grade 9.

Submitted photos

SOUTH HADLEY – The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts (PVPA) Charter Public School Music Department presented a Winter Music Showcase: Chills and Thrills last weekend featuring performances by the school's premier ensembles as well as up and coming musicians. The two unique musical evenings were directed by Rahul Roy, Jeremy Milligan, and David Cavallin.

Please see **MUSIC**, page 10

## Planning Board 'punts' on sign bylaw proposal

By Walter Hamilton  
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY - After hours of efforts to unsnarl complicated and confusing sign bylaws, the Planning Board last week - facing the civic version of the football scenario of fourth down with backs against the end zone - opted to punt.

Board members thus agreed at its Jan. 12 meeting to seek a new approach to the rules that regulate the size, locations, purposes, designs, and other aspects of roadside signs, following a review and draft of revisions assembled by planning staff and expert consultants.

After the review, Planning Director Anne Capra characterized the latest results as "clear as mud."

The board had ordered the latest effort to update and clarify the bylaw after mem-

bers encountered similar problems when it conducted a previous review of the bylaws in November.

The Planning Board, at its most recent meeting, endorsed an effort to fundamentally simplify and streamline the signage permitting process after it continued to struggle with the newest proposed bylaw amendments.

"Does anyone see a framework in which we could just scrap this whole thing ... and what would that framework be like if we were to start from scratch?" Capra said. "Because I'm not sure that continuing to work through this bylaw as it is, is going to get us to where we need to be. Should we go through it and ... take out the key components and build off those key components?"

Board members agreed

Please see **BOARD**, page 9

## New 'Fix-It' program to arrive at the library

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

SOUTH HADLEY – When you have something break, tear, or malfunction at home that you don't know how to fix or can't fix yourself, it can be very frustrating to deal with.

The South Hadley Public Library is introducing a new and wonderful program, the Fix-It program, which will include volunteers to help with repairs like basic sewing, simple jewelry repairs, plant care, light household fixes, or general troubleshooting for technology.

The program is seeking these volunteers, and they don't need to be professionals or have any formal training, who enjoy helping others learn how to fix these little things themselves.

"The inspiration came from seeing how many people have small, fixable problems - a loose button, a lamp

that won't turn on, a plant slowly wilting in the corner - and either don't know



**FIX-IT ONLY WORKS BECAUSE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION - BOTH THE PEOPLE WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME AND THE PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO SHOW UP, LEARN, AND TRY."**

**DESIREE SMELCER**  
ADULT SERVICES  
LIBRARIAN

where to start or can't justify the cost of a repair shop," said Adult Services Librarian

Desiree Smelcer. "Libraries are about sharing knowledge, and Fix It is really about that: neighbors helping neighbors, skills being passed along, and normalizing the idea that we don't have to replace everything the moment it breaks."

The Fix-It program brings in the neighborhood to help people with their fixes and teaches their skills to further them into the community. The sessions will take place in two-hour sessions where people will have the opportunity to get support in a one-on-one capacity.

"The goal is to fix what we can, learn along the way, and keep useful items out of the landfill while building community connections," said Smelcer.

While complete fixes or repairs aren't guaranteed, the program still offers a way in a safe, judgment-free environment for people to learn how to fix things they may

Please see **LIBRARY**, page 9

## A chorus of confidence: Harlequins' Revue celebrates finding your voice

By Tina Lesniak  
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley High School Harlequins are inviting audiences to experience an evening of music, growth, and self-discovery with this year's Musical Revue, themed "Finding Your Voice." Rather than telling one continuous story, the revue weaves together a series of student-selected songs that reflect the emotional milestones many people encounter as they grow into themselves.

"The overall theme is 'Finding Your Voice,'" said Harlequin's advisor BethAyn Curtis. "Each song represents moments many people experience: wanting to belong, dreaming of more, making difficult choices, learning from mistakes, and growing into who we are meant to be," Cur-



Submitted photo

Freshman Nora Proulx is getting ready to sing her heart out at the Musical Revue.

tis explained. The theme emerged organically through the students' choices. "We arrived at this through the song choices the students made. We asked the students to choose songs that taught a lesson, and when all of the songs were selected, I spent time organizing them into a logical progression. The result is our 'Finding Your Voice' show."

Unlike a traditional musical, which follows a single storyline with defined characters, a revue offers flexibility and variety. "A revue is a great way to present a variety of styles of music in one package," Curtis said. "A traditional musical tells one continuous story from beginning to end. It has one style of music and defined characters with a clear plot line. A revue is a collection of songs created around a

Please see **REVUE**, page 9

### Lions name student scholarship recipient



Cole Fuller gratefully receiving a scholarship from the Granby Lions Club.

Submitted photos



Enjoying a delicious meal prepared by Dave Mendoza.

GRANBY – At their January 20 meeting, the Granby Lions Club had their 2025 Scholarship Recipient, Cole Fuller, who is attending the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth,

for nursing, speak about his time attending Granby High School and his first year in college.

A letter was also read from Sawyer Clarke, our other scholarship recipient,

who is attending the University of Kentucky, but was unable to attend our meeting.

Thanks to Dave Mendoza for helping us prepare a great meal!

### Chief Gundersen's Office Hours

SOUTH HADLEY – Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen will be hosting several office hours around town between now and the end of March.

- January 29, 10:30 a.m. to noon, at the South Hadley Council on Aging
- February 4, noon to 1:30 p.m., at Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- February 5, noon to 1:30 p.m., at Lathrop Village Community Room
- February 16, 10:30 a.m. to noon, at the South Hadley Council on Aging
- February 24, 5 to 6:30 p.m., at the South Hadley Public Library
- March 6, 10:30 a.m. to noon, at the South Hadley Council on Aging
- March 25, noon to 1:30 p.m., at Newton Manor

### Personal property bills have been mailed

SOUTH HADLEY – FY 2026 Qtr. 3 Real Estate & Personal Property bills were mailed out to residents on December 31, 2025. The due date for Real Estate & Personal Property bills is February 2, 2026.

If you have not received your bills, please email our

office at: collector@south-hadley.ma.gov or call 413-538-5030 ext. 6189, and we can send you a new bill.

Bills can also be viewed/printed through Invoice Cloud which can be accessed from our website.

Payment can be made online through the Town

of South Hadley's website, southhadley.ma.gov (click on the online bill pay box on the home page),

by mail, dropped in our Dropbox located behind the Police Department on Bridge Street or you can pay in person Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

### SHHS basketball teams and service club host NHN donation drive

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Service Club, in partnership with the boys and girls basketball teams, is hosting a donation drive to benefit Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Monetary donations as well as food items are greatly appreciated.

For ever \$1 donated, or each food item donated, you will receive a raffle ticket for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to a choice of the following: Granby Grain, Odyssey Bookshop, Big Y, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Vanished Valley Brewing Co., Master

Chef, Pizza Palace of Granby, Thai Place, Dunkin Donuts, and Randall's Farm.

The drawings will be held during the halftimes of the following games: Boys Games: January 30; Girls Games: January 26 and 27, February 2, 6, and 9.

### Two Town Food Drive set for Feb. 7

SOUTH HADLEY/GRANBY – South Hadley and Granby Democratic Town Committees come together to create a special food drive in order to stock up food pantries in the area.

South Hadley is supporting Neighbors Helping Neighbors, South Hadley. Drop off at the South Hadley High School, 9 a.m. to noon. Contact: Ann Stockton email: southhadleydemocrats@gmail.com

Granby Food Drive will focus on Granby to Go, 12:30 -3:30 at the Congregational Church 235 State Street: Tobias Wilson Email: chair@granbydemocrats.com.

These are the following items are most in demand:

- Any feminine hygiene products, Shampoo/condition comb, toothpaste, deodorant, and Bar soap
- Cereal hot or cold, Soups, especially during the winter
- Pet food, canned and dry for cats and dogs
- Canned meats such as spam, beef stew, corned beef, and hash

Please check expiration dates. Food and monetary donations will be accepted.

### The Horace Smith Fund

\$317,000 available in Scholarship and Fellowship Awards – Application Deadline March 15th

REGION – The Horace Smith Fund will be awarding \$317,000 in scholarships and fellowships to residents of Hampden County who have also graduated from an eligible high school or private school. This year, 21 scholarships, four fellowships and one William R. Rooney Award for students with special needs will be presented to recipients at the June 18th Awards Night ceremony at Storrow-

ton Carriage House in West Springfield.

Scholarships are offered not only to graduating high school seniors but also to students already in college or those wishing to return to college. Scholarships of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and are renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$7,500 annually and renewable for one additional year to students pursuing a full-time graduate degree. Students must maintain at least a B average to renew.

Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including academic records, merit, and financial need. Of great im-

portance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance. Applicants must submit their transcripts and, if applicable, college entrance exam scores or graduate degree-specific tests, along with three letters of recommendation.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or be mailed to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, and on-line at www.HoraceSmith-Fund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

**Tuesday Night 6pm**  
**Pitch Night**  
 \$5 per person

**Wednesday Night 6:30pm**  
**Bar Bingo**

**Thursday Night 7-10 pm**  
**Karaoke by New England Disc Jockeys**

**Friday Night starts at 7:30 pm**  
**Trivia Night \$5 per person**

**Saturday Night 5-7 pm**  
**Spaghetti Dinner**

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**Saturday, Jan. 31st 6-9pm**  
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USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK LOIN CHOPS or ROAST <b>\$2.98</b> lb	CUT FREE WHOLE OR HALF	USDA INSP. FRESH WHOLE CHICKEN TWIN PAK ..... <b>\$1.44</b> lb
USDA INSP. SMOKED PORK SHOULDER PICNIC ..... <b>\$2.66</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF CHUCK STEAK or ROAST <b>\$5.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN TENDERLOIN TRAY PAK ... <b>\$1.68</b> lb
<b>SLICED IN OUR DELI</b>	USDA INSP. FROZEN SARA LEE CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE 19.6 OZ... <b>\$4.99</b> ea	USDA INSP. FROZEN SNOW CRAB CLUSTER COOKED. <b>\$9.99</b> lb
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USDA INSP. SWISS CHEESE ..... <b>\$4.44</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF 7 LB BAG <b>\$3.99</b> lb	
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# Nomination papers available for 2026 Annual Town Election

**SOUTH HADLEY** - Nomination papers for the April 14, 2026, South Hadley Annual Town Election are available through Friday, Feb. 20, 2026 in the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall, 116 Main St., South Hadley. Nomination papers may be obtained during office hours, Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Appointments outside of regular office hours may be available by request. Any changes in hours will be posted to the Clerk's webpage at [www.southhadley.org/clerk](http://www.southhadley.org/clerk).

Interested candidates must be registered voters in the town of South Hadley. To appear on the ballot, candidates must obtain nomination papers from the Town Clerk's Office and have them signed by local registered voters.

Town-wide offices require

50 signatures on nomination papers from registered voters in South Hadley. Town Meeting Member offices require 10 signatures from registered voters in their respective precinct. It is recommended that prospective candidates obtain more than the minimum number of signatures.

Papers for the following seats will be available:

- Selectboard- Two Seats - Three-Year Term
- School Committee - Two Seats - Three-Year Term
- Board of Health - Two Seats - Three-Year Term
- Municipal Light Board - One Seat - Three-Year Term
- Board of Assessors - One Seat - Three-Year Term
- Housing Authority - One Seat - Five-Year Term
- Trustee Free Public Library - Three Seats - Three-Year Term
- Planning Board - Two

- Seats - Three-Year Term
- Town Meeting Member - Eight Seats per precinct - Three-Year Term
- Town Meeting Member - One Seat, Precinct B - Two-Year Term
- Town Meeting Member - One Seat Precinct B, One Seat Precinct C - One-Year Term

Once the candidate has obtained all the signatures needed, nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 for signatures to be certified. Interested candidates may direct their questions and comments 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).



Submitted photo

A beautiful view of the lake on Ledges Golf Club's property.

## Guided Public Trek at Ledges Golf Course

**SOUTH HADLEY**— On Saturday, Feb. 7 at 1 p.m. the South Hadley Bike/Walk Committee will host a guided Trek at Ledges Golf Club, 18 Mulligan Road, South Hadley, a resource owned by the Town of South Hadley. Come and spend a Saturday afternoon 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 in Holyoke, across 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 12:45 p.m. in front of the Ledges Clubhouse. The Club's parking lot is located on the right, before the circle in front of

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 club facilities, including restrooms, are closed for the season. Participants of all ages and new Trekkers are always welcome!

Treks are subject to change or cancellation due

to weather or ground conditions. 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. Bike/Walk's Ledges Golf Course Trek Map showing the cart paths and several Trek routes can be found in the Maps and Resources section of the Bike/Walk page.

## Residents: Take the Budget Task Force survey

**SOUTH HADLEY** – You are invited to participate in a research study for the Town of South Hadley. This project is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Melinda Tarsi-Goldfien, Department of Political Science, Bridgewater State University, in collaboration with the South Hadley Budget Task Force. The purpose of this study is to collect feedback from residents on the town's finances. The study is voluntary and confidential. The survey responses are collected and compiled by Bridgewater State University under the direction of Dr. Tarsi-Goldfien. The survey results will be reported to the Budget Task Force and residents upon completion. Take the survey at [https://bridgew.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3U1eV5odmoqm-w4K](https://bridgew.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3U1eV5odmoqm-w4K).

## SHPD reminds residents of snow removal bylaw

**SOUTH HADLEY** – Just a reminder that the South Hadley Town Bylaw § 315-2.3 requires the removal of snow from sidewalks. The snow must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after a snowfall. Failure to remove snow could result in a fine of \$100 each day the snow is not removed. Property owners that abut sidewalks that are on the DPW sidewalk list are not absolved of their responsibility for sidewalk maintenance.

§ 315-2.4 Placement of snow on public streets.

No person shall shovel, plow, blow, or otherwise place snow onto any public street. Any person found violating any subsection of this section may be subject to a fine not to exceed \$300.



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# Opinion

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### Matters

By Russell Gloor

#### I'm divorced; can I get benefits from my ex-husband?

##### Dear Rusty:

After 16 years of marriage, we were divorced. I have never remarried, but he has. When he starts collecting Social Security (he is 64 now and still working), is it true that I can claim ex-spousal benefits or does that go to the current wife? How would I find this info?

Signed: A Divorced Spouse

##### Dear Divorced Spouse:

The fact that your ex-husband has remarried has no influence on your ability to collect benefits based on his record. If you are eligible for ex-spouse benefits (because you did not remarry), you can get those benefits regardless of whether his current wife collects benefits on his record. In other words, both you and his current wife can both collect spousal benefits from your ex-husband's earnings record.

Your eligibility for an ex-spouse benefit is determined by comparing your own SS retirement benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA) to his – if your own SS benefit at your FRA is less than 50% of your ex's FRA benefit entitlement, and you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, are not currently married and are at least 62 years old, then you can get a "spousal boost" (an amount added to your own Social Security retirement amount). In fact, if you have been divorced for over two years, you can get an ex-spouse benefit even though he is not yet receiving his own SS retirement benefit.

Be aware, however, if you claim any Social Security benefit (both your own SS retirement amount and your ex-spouse "spousal boost") before you reach your full retirement age, the monthly amount you get will be reduced according to how much before your full retirement age you claim. Spouse and ex-spouse benefits reach maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

I suggest you contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make a telephone appointment to evaluate whether you are entitled to benefits as an ex-spouse. If your own SS retirement benefit at your FRA is less than half of your ex's FRA entitlement, you will be. To apply for those benefits you will need a copy of your divorce decree (and perhaps your marriage certificate), and your ex-husband's Social Security number (if you do not have his SSN, you can provide his date and place of birth and his parents' names, and SSA will likely be able to locate your ex's SS record).

SSA will be able to tell you what your total monthly benefit as an ex-spouse will be when you meet with them, at which point you can decide whether to claim your benefits early or wait until your FRA to achieve your maximum amount as an ex-spouse.

## Winter sowing is a fun experiment

“Winter sowing” always comes up as a hot topic on social media this time of year.

The basic premise of winter sowing is to plant your seeds in mini greenhouses (gallon jugs), place the jugs outside and simply let nature take over. The advantage being that no heat mats or lights are needed. No window sills full of seedlings, either.

While I don't think it is as simple as it sounds, I do think trying it would be a fun experiment.

Read on this week and next to consider some of the pros and possible cons of this seed starting technique.

Years ago I read a blog where a master gardener was encouraging folks to start native perennials in milk jugs outside. The seeds of many of these plants require a period of cold and moist stratification to break seed dormancy.

In simple terms, they need to go through winter in order to sprout. Think of it as nature's safety mechanism; seeds germinate at the right time to survive and thrive!

You may ask, then, why not just sow the seeds outdoors in the garden? In theory it sounds good, but in reality “the wild” is not the best seed bed.

From hungry birds and rodents, to wind and drenching rains, success is hit or miss. Safely inside the milk jug, but at the same time outside in the elements to freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw, tricky seeds are coaxed into germinating. Success at your fingertips!

Here are the nuts and bolts! Start with clean gallon containers, the see-through kind that water or milk come in. About four inches up, just below the handle, safely cut around the jug, leaving an inch or so on either side of the

handle as a “hinge.”

You should be able to bend the top back and forth. Make a number of drainage holes in the bottom; three or four per quadrant.

There is a lot of advice out

germination is great, you can always transplant some out.

Close the container and seal it with duct tape. Be sure to label the jug with the plant name via a paint pen, really the only writing utensil that won't smear, fade or wash away when exposed to the elements.

Place the jugs in full exposure outdoors and with the cap off, so that heat can escape and small amounts of moisture can penetrate. When the temperature outdoors heats up past 60 degrees, be sure to take the duct tape off and vent your seedlings. Check often and water as needed.

The pros recommend to cover with a blanket if frost threatens or even move heat lovers inside on cold nights so that the seedlings won't freeze. To prevent tip-over by four-legged friends or playful kids, pros also suggest putting the jugs in trays or bins.

As you can see, this method is not maintenance-free, but certainly worthy of a try especially for gardeners who are short on indoor space or in the mood to get their hands dirty earlier in the season than normal! January and February is the perfect time to start seeds that need a cold treatment.

Look for key terms on the seed packet, such as “stratification needed,” “sow in the fall,” etc. You can also use this technique to sow cold hardy annuals in March—think chard, spinach, kale, snapdragons, bachelor button and the like.

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



there on how to do that, from drilling holes, to twisting an exacto knife around and around and even using a hot tool to melt a hole in the plastic (really!). I generally like to make holes in reused plastic containers by banging a large nail through the bottom into a piece of scrap lumber placed underneath.

Once the drainage holes are made, fill the bottom of the jug with moist seed starting mix. With the soil in place, sow your seeds.

If the seeds are tiny or even relatively tiny, don't cover them with soil, simply space them out evenly on top and press into the surface.

You may wonder how to deal with tiny seed. I place it in a folded index card and gently tap the card so that the seeds fly out. If you can handle the seed easily, do cover with only a small amount soil, say an eighth of an inch or so and firm down.

How many seeds to sow is a tricky question. If you want to keep the plants in the jug until they go in the garden, then hope for four plants, maybe six per jug at the most, figuring how big they will be at transplant stage.

For tricky germinators, perhaps double or triple the amount of seed you sow versus how many you desire. If



## A final hike of 2025

by Julie Midura

“You know, honey, we always talk about how we'll REALLY start living ‘some day.’ Once the kids are grown. Once we have more time and more money. Once we retire. But how do we know that we'll both be physically capable of doing something so demanding if we wait for ‘some day’ to arrive? How do we know that we will even reach that elusive ‘some day’?”

It was a beautiful August day in 2016, and Tom and I were standing on the summit of Mt. Lafayette in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. We were completing Tom's lifelong dream of hiking the Franconia Ridge Loop—a majestic 9-mile hike featured on a National Geographic List of the 20 Best Hikes in the World.

On that summer afternoon almost ten years ago,



Please see **HIKE**, 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.

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

## Turley Election Policy

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

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

## TOWN Reminder

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### The budget and importance of the COA

#### To the Editor,

Members of the Budget Task Force face a difficult mission. How will we maintain important programs and services for all our citizens without slashing school budgets, cutting town services, closing parks, or reducing public safety?

We are living longer, and older adults are facing declines in physical and mental capacity and a contraction of social interactions.

We are experiencing limited health care services, skyrocketing housing costs, as well as nutrition and food insecurity. Every month, close to 2,000 meals are delivered to South Hadley residents, and over 500 congregate meals are served at the Senior Center.

South Hadley has a long history of investing resources to support the social, emotional, and physical needs of older adults, and the Senior Center is at its core.

When you visit the Senior Center, you will be greeted by a welcoming staff in a modern, multi-use facility.

You will find special programs led by experts in technology training, tax preparation, or health insurance.

You will find small and large groups learning how to dance, draw, paint, or play a ukulele.

You will see people listening to a bluegrass band, practicing Tai Chi, watching a movie, playing cards, or practicing

yoga.

You will find creative activities, book clubs, bingo, social events, and travel opportunities.

You will find extensive programs for exercise and movement. Healthy Bones and Balance, Fitness Basics, Zumba, Ballroom Dancing, and Chair Volleyball are all designed to get you moving.

You will find a massage therapist, a foot nurse, hearing and vision services, a visiting public health nurse, a LGBTQ+ social group, as well as veterans and dementia caregivers' support.

Our older adult population is increasing, not declining. In a perfect world, we would be increasing programs, not contemplating ways to reduce services. We would not be asking those living on limited fixed incomes to absorb large increases in property taxes. We would not be considering closing the Senior Center one day out of five.

Like all others, older adults strive for a life of independence, dignity, and respect. It is my hope we may continue to offer a mix of physical, emotional, and social support. It is my hope we may continue to encourage cognitive engagement and combat isolation. It is my hope we may continue to support older adults by recognizing their inherent value and meeting their basic needs.

Jim Bosman  
South Hadley

HIKE from page 4

I was trying to convince my husband that we should attempt to hike all of New Hampshire's 48 tallest peaks. I was 51, and he was 59 at the time. There were numerous reasons not to pursue such a time-consuming and physically challenging endeavor. One of which, as Tom stated, was because "We're far too old and there's no way we can hike up all those mountains in our lifetime."

It took a bit of persuasion on my part, but he finally agreed to chase after those 48 mountain peaks.

Since that day, Tom and I have not only completed the entire White Mountain 4,000 Footer List once, but twice including climbing every peak during the winter season. And we've repeated several of our favorites over a half dozen times. In addition, we've backpacked 800 miles on the Appalachian Trail, completing 8 of the 14 states. We have also climbed the second highest peak in the continental United States-14,440' Mt. Elbert in Colorado-when I was fifty-eight and Tom was sixty-six years old.

The thousands of miles we have walked over the past ten years have not just proven what our bodies and minds are capable of. Every mile has been a journey of adventure, self-discovery, courage, humility, resilience, contentment and gratitude. And every footprint we have left on every woodland trail and every slab of granite has propelled us forward to the next.

Our final hike of 2025 in New Hampshire, just two weeks ago, continued to do the same.

It's minus 2 degrees when we start up the trail toward the summit of Mt. Jackson at 4:15 a.m. The sky is black and the beams of our headlamps pierce the darkened forest. When we lift our heads upward, our lights il-

luminare the trees, and they appear like figures standing guard over the landscape. The snow-laden evergreens groan under the weight, pressing closer to the ground, seeming to bow to us as we pass. The silence is full, broken only by the crunch of our boots on the hard-packed snow.

When we break treeline, everything changes. We brace ourselves against the onslaught of howling wind. The sheer force pushes our bodies backward. We slam our trekking poles into the hard-packed snow to steady ourselves, while hoping that our spike-clad boots anchor us to the icy granite. The final steep pitch makes my heart tremble. Adrenaline is coursing through my body. I grab onto rocks and pull myself upward, eyes watering, skin pierced with the sting of icy needles. I breathe a sigh of relief when we reach the plateau, and we rush to the leeward side to escape the wind's torment.

We find a partially sheltered ledge and quickly spread our bright green sleeping bag over our sleep pads atop several feet of snow. We crawl inside of the double-wide down bag and snuggle close together. Based on the weather, we know we can't remain immobile for long. Movement keeps the body warm. Stillness allows the cold to penetrate the numerous layers of clothing we are wearing. Today, even the trees are shivering.

We sip hot apple cider in an attempt to warm our insides while waiting for the sun to crest the distant horizon. The cold kisses our cheeks and the wind fills our ears. We inhale the frigid mountain air and watch plumes of vapor rise as we exhale. We remain snuggled in our lofty sleeping bag on this snowy perch for over an hour, unwilling to leave

in spite of the cold settling into our bones. For we don't want to miss ONE. SINGLE. MINUTE. of this unforgettable moment that is unfolding before us.

The earth itself seems to be holding its breath, waiting for the show to begin. With eyes focused eastward, we watch the black of night turn into the blazing red of dawn. The stars above are being replaced with an inferno of fiery reds and blazing oranges-like molten lava spreading as the horizon slowly burns.

And there it is. The shimmering golden sphere we have been waiting for, spreading its golden light down the mountainside and awakening the earth from its slumber. The brilliant rays stretch from the heavens and dance upon the earth, giving life to everything they touch.

This experience is just one of the many that will burn in our hearts and memories for as long as there is breath in our lungs. An experience that we may never have witnessed had we not decided to chase a dream ten years ago. Had we waited until we retired. Had we waited for 'some day' to arrive.

I implore you to not allow



your age, fitness level, current circumstances, past failures or ANYTHING ELSE dictate what you are capable of! I encourage you to chase the dream, seize the opportunity and never live regretting what could have been if only you had taken the chance. We

have but one wild and crazy life. TODAY is the day to go out and LIVE it.

Tom and I have lived life to the absolute fullest over the past 10 years. Adventuring on weekends and vacations from work. But for one of us, at least, life is opening up to

even more possibilities and opportunities. I'm thrilled to announce that after dedicating fifty years of his life to his career, Tom completed his final day as a working man on the last day of 2025!

See you in the wild places, my friends!

ST. JUDE'S NOVENA

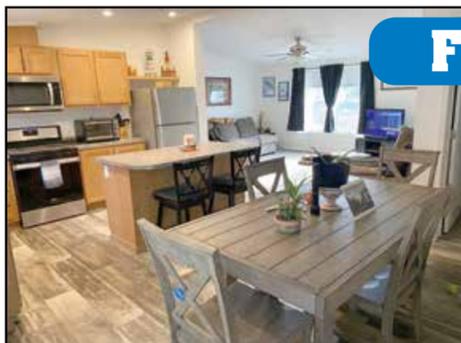
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## Tigers unable to hold lead, fall to Comp at Hoophall

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD—Except for a moment late in the first quarter, the Chicopee Comp Colts never held the lead in the 2026 Panini Hoophall Classic game against South Hadley until the final three minutes of regulation.

The Colts outscored the Tigers, 13-5, down the stretch leading to a 51-45 non-league victory at Blake Arena located on the Springfield College campus, last Thursday.

“Obviously, it feels great to get a win after a tough

start,” said Chicopee Comp head coach Gavin Miller. “We were able to pull it together. We use trust as our kind of word for everything. We trusted each other, and we were able to pull through.”

It was the first meeting on the hardwood between the boys’ basketball teams since 2017 when they were members of the same league.

A player from each team received an award at the conclusion of the Hoophall game.

South Hadley junior forward Tim Loughrey, who posted a double-double with

16 points and 13 rebounds, received the Most Outstanding player award.

The M.V.P. award was given to Comp junior guard Elijah Kleps, who led his team with 15 points. He scored nine points in the second half.

The Colts (7-2), who were ranked 10th in the MIAA Division 2 state power rankings, won their third consecutive game despite scoring a season low 51 points. They had scored more than 75 points in their previous two games.

Please see **TIGERS**, page 5



Noah Hambley rushes toward the hoop.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Isiah James tries to get around an opponent as he heads for the basket.



Tim Loughrey tries to get another shot at the hoop.



Noah Rivera tries to keep the ball moving around the perimeter.

## White shines as Granby overwhelms Sci-Tech



Kaitlyn Curran sends a long inbound pass away.

SPRINGFIELD – Last Monday night, Granby girls basketball defeated host Sci-Tech 73-48. Kalli White had a really impressive night with 35 points, including 10 made free throws. Ellie Szlosek, Rowan Cook, and Meredith Bartosz had eight points each. Granby was also phenomenal on defense. Granby is now 8-3 with a 5-2 Franklin West record. Granby hosts Ludlow on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m.



Meredith Bartosz tries to pass it away from the sideline.



Kalli White keeps the ball away from the clipboard.



Ellie Szlosek starts down the court.



Kaelyn Slapski goes after a loose ball.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibel



Brenna Moreno comes up with an offensive rebound.

## Tigers grab win over Chicopee Comp

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY—The ending of the girls’ junior varsity basketball game between the Chicopee Comp Lady Colts and the South Hadley Lady Tigers was very exciting. There wasn’t as much drama in the main event.

The Lady Tigers, who won the j.v. game in overtime, coasted to a 68-32 non-league home victory over the Lady Colts in the varsity contest, last Monday night (Jan.12).

“Our league is very difficult, so every win is important to us,” said South Hadley junior Cara Dean, who scored 16 of her game-high 27 points in the second quarter. “We’ve been competitive in every game that we’ve played so far this season.”

It was the Lady Tigers’ first win at Thomas B. Landers Court since they defeated Carver High School, 55-34 in the Division 4 quarterfinals last March.

South Hadley (2-5) began the 2025-26 regular season with a 64-30 victory

Please see **WIN**, page 5

TIGERS from page 4

“Credit to South Hadley,” Miller said. “They switched things up and gave us some different looks defensively. My guys were kind of confused at the start of the first half. We were able to talk about it at halftime and kind of get a game plan for some of the stuff that they were doing, but we were able to figure it out.”

The Tigers (4-6), who lost their third game in a row, were ranked 27th in the Division 4 power rankings.

“We’re now 4-6 and we just need to find a way to win some games during the rest of the regular season,” said South Hadley head coach Chris Gerber. “The players were very excited to play

Comp at the Hoopball. They know each other, and this was a cool experience for them.”

While the Tigers outscored the Colts, 26-16, in the paint, they only made three shots from beyond the three-point arc.

With three minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, Comp senior forward Brody Fay (6 points) was fouled while making an inside hoop. He made the bonus free throw completing the old fashion three point play giving his team a 41-40 lead.

The Tigers retook the lead 15 seconds later when Loughrey scored an inside basket.

It was the final time that South Hadley held the lead in the contest.

Comp built a 47-42 lead



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

South Hadley boys basketball takes on Chicopee Comprehensive at Blake Arena during the Hoopball Classic last Thursday afternoon.

with 1:45 left on the scoreboard clock following back-to-back 3-pointers from senior guard Modesto Galindrez (7 points) and junior forward Jacoby Haney (13 Points).

A 3-pointer by junior guard Noah Hambley, who finished with a game-high 18 points, sliced the Tigers deficit to two points (47-45) with 1:25 remaining.

Then Haney sealed the deal by making four straight foul shots in the final minute.

“We always seem to start every game slowly, but I’m very proud that we were able to battle back late in the game. It took a total team effort to get the job done tonight,” said Fay, who has played many basketball games at Blake Arena in the past with his AAU team. “It was a lot of

fun getting to playing another game on this court. It was an awesome environment.”

Playing on a college size court didn’t seem to bother the Tigers players as they scored the first nine points.

“We were very focused at the start of the game,” Gerber said. “I thought we played very well until the end.”

Loughrey, who has scored more than 500 career points, began things with a put-back hoop. He also added an inside basket following a Hambley jumper before a 3-pointer from senior guard Isiah James (9 points) increased South Hadley’s lead to 9-0 with 3:25 left in the opening frame.

“It felt great when we jumped out to an early 9-0 lead,” Hambley said. “Comp is a very good basketball

team, but we knew that we could compete with them.”

Chicopee Comp finally broke the ice ten seconds later following a Kelps old fashion three point play.

The Colts, who made a total of eight 3-pointers, took the lead for the first time at 11-9 with 1:30 remaining in the quarter when Fay drained a 3-pointer from the right side.

A lay-up by James tied the score for the first time at the end of the first quarter.

James also hit a base-line jumper less than a minute into the second quarter before Hambley took over the spotlight.

Hambley scored 11 points during the second quarter. He made a 3-pointer, two lay-ups and four foul shots, which

gave his team a 26-19 half-time lead.

With 3:15 left in the third quarter, a Loughrey inside hoop increased the Tigers lead to 32-23.

Loughrey wound up scoring all the Tigers points during that quarter.

Kelps scored seven points over the final three minutes of the third quarter, which closed the gap to 34-30.

In the final seconds of the quarter, Comp senior guard Colby Paul (6 points) buried a 3-pointer from the left side making it a one point game entering the final eight minutes.

The Tigers managed to hold onto the lead for the first five minutes of the final quarter before the Colts came storming back.



Griffin Soderbaum gets ready to drive to the hoop.

T-Birds offense dries up in loss to Bridgeport

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-18-4-2) continued to have a tough time location offense, falling 4-1 to the the Bridgeport Islanders (16-17-2-1) on Saturday night inside Total Mortgage Arena.

A bad break for T-Birds netminder Vadim Zherenko resulted in Bridgeport’s game-opening tally at 6:37 of the opening period, as Zherenko lost his balance and fell in his blue paint, allowing Daylan Kuefler to carry the puck around the net and wrap it past the fallen goaltender to make it 1-0 Bridgeport.

Aside from that unfortunate break, the T-Birds and

Islanders played a mostly defensive-minded first period, as Zherenko’s nine saves and Henrik Tikkanen’s eight stops in the Bridgeport crease accounted for much of the action on the scoresheet.

Matthew Peca quickly got his troops back on track, as the T-Birds captain slipped a wrister through Tikkanen just 49 seconds into period two, tying the score, 1-1, and extending his point streak to five consecutive games. Matt Luff also extended his season-long point streak to seven games with the primary assist on Springfield’s first marker of the evening.

However, that potential

momentum-changer was quickly washed out when Cam Berg connected on a wrister from the left circle just 2:08 later, restoring a one-goal Bridgeport lead, 2-1.

Shots and chances continued to come at a premium for both teams, as the clubs combined for only 43 shots all evening, including just 25 in the final 40 minutes of play.

The T-Birds never did receive a power play in this one, and the club’s last-minute efforts with Zherenko on the bench proved fruitless, as Adam Beckman and Eetu Liukas each connected on empty-netters to give Bridgeport the final goals of the night.

WIN from page 4

over Belchertown at the annual Pioneer Valley Tip-off before losing five consecutive games against Valley League opponents.

The Lady Tigers are the only Division 4 team in the Valley League.

One of their league opponents is Springfield Central, who’s the top ranked team in the Division 1 MIAA power rankings. Minnechaug Regional, Northampton, and Longmeadow, are the three Division 2 teams in the Valley League, while Pittsfield is the lone Division 3 representative.

“We do have the second highest strength of schedule in the entire state behind Central,” said South Hadley head coach Paul Dubuc. “It’s a very tough schedule, but we just want to keep getting better every day.”

Despite only winning two of their first seven regular season games, South Hadley was ranked 11th in the Division 4 state power rankings, which were released on January 13.

The Lady Tigers other non-league opponents are Frontier Regional, who were ranked third in Division 4, Wahconah Regional, who’s ranked eighth in Division 4, Hoosac Valley, Pioneer Valley Christian Academy, Dru-ry, and Westfield.

“Even though we’ve lost a few games this season, we knew that our state power ranking would a little bit higher because of our schedule,” Dean said. “Playing the higher Division teams will

prepare us for the Western Mass. and state tournaments.”

The top 32 teams in each of the five Divisions automatically qualifies for the state tournament.

Chicopee Comp had a 1-9 record following the road loss. They squeaked out a 37-36 home win against Agawam on January 6 and were ranked 60th in the Division 2 state power rankings.

Not only were the 27 points scored by Dean against Comp a season-high, but it was also her career high. She scored 21 points in a home loss against Central.

Seven other South Hadley players scored at least two points in their first home win of the season.

Sophomore Olivia Athas scored 18 points before leaving the game with an injury late in the third quarter.

Athas scored ten points in the opening quarter, which helped the Lady Tigers build a 17-7 lead.

Comp did manage to keep the score close for the first four minutes of the game.

Sophomore Trinity McCarthy, who finished the game with nine points, made a free throw with 4:05 left in the quarter, tying the score at 7-7 before South Hadley pulled away with a 13-0 run.

Dean capped off the run by hitting a 3-pointer from the top of the key early in the second quarter.

Following a jumper from Comp sophomore Bailey Neuhauser (4 points), Dean made four more field goals before sinking another 3-pointer from the right

corner. It increased the Lady Tigers lead to 31-11 with 30 seconds left in the opening half.

“Once I hit my first shot of the second quarter, I got into a groove,” Dean said. “It also feels great to finally win a home game.”

Following a steal, Dean buried a pull-up jumper, which was her 19th point of the first half. She made two more 3-pointers and a lay-up in third quarter.

With no time remaining on the scoreboard clock, Neuhauser hit a pair of free throws making the halftime score 33-13

The other two scorers in the game for Comp were senior Sheyenne Santiago (6 points) and junior Walieris Pena (8 points).

Both teams only have one senior listed on their varsity rosters.

South Hadley, who won last year’s contest by 18 points at Comp, outscored the Lady Colts, 20-7, in the third quarter.

The Lady Tigers held a commanding 53-20 advantage entering the fourth quarter.

South Hadley sophomore Grace Sherman made three lay-ups during the final eight minutes leading to her six points.

Rounding out the scoring column for the Lady Tigers were junior Kate Phillips (5 points), junior Ryley McMahon (4 points), sophomore Simone Quinn (3 points), junior Taylor Bullough (3 points), and senior Sofie Quinn (2 points).

Registration set to open Feb. 1 for Quabbin Valley

SOUTH HADLEY – On Sunday, Jan. 11, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

At the meeting it was determined registration for players will open up on Sunday, Feb. 1.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother’s Day Saturday as well as a week-night game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother’s Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determine as the league’s board explores possibilities for inter-league matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall

league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration link will be live on Feb. 1 at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight and Mother’s Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother’s Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Play-offs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

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**MUSIC** from page 1

Friday night performances featured first semester works from PVPA's Orchestra, Middle School String Ensemble, Concert Band and Chorus, as well as the High School ensemble Adagio and the Middle School Rock and Soul Revue ensemble. Saturday evening performances showcased the department's audition ensembles including Sharp Attitude (A Cappella), Gig Band, and Pop R&B.

PVPA's music department works to provide students the opportunity to explore music in a variety of formats, to play for different audiences, and encourages creativity in the musical process both on and off stage.

The Music Showcase was the first of this year's full

production calendar. PVPA's next main stage production is Mali Sadio, featuring Wofa: West African Drum and Dance Company on Feb 6 and 7. For information about upcoming shows, please visit [pvpa.org/shows](http://pvpa.org/shows).

**About PVPA**

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School is a regional public charter school serving 400 students in grades 7-12 that seeks to connect the creative process with critical thinking to inspire a love of learning. With 15 full time Arts teachers, PVPA offers all students a wide range of arts classes across five departments. For more information about PVPA, or to apply [www.pvpa.org/admissions](http://www.pvpa.org/admissions). The deadline to apply for the 2026/2027 school year is Feb 11.



Submitted photos

**A Cappella Group - Sharp Attitude, directed by David Cavallin - L-R: Avalena Alward, Grade 9; Hannah D'Amario, Grade 10; Juniper Brucato, Grade 10; Natalia Brewer, Grade 12; Sophie Malzone, Grade 12; Kiara Humphreys, Grade 11; Phoenix Cotton, Grade 10.**



**Grade 7 and 8 Rock and Soul Revue, directed by Rahul Roy.**



**Maggie Grant, Grade 9.**



**Eva Veras, Grade 12.**



**Jacob Barowsky, Grade 10.**



**Dylan Kelting-Massar, Grade 12.**



**L - R: Marcos Nieves Santiago, Grade 11, and Ella Kirchner, Grade 8.**



**Samara Sawyer, Grade 11.**



**PVPA Orchestra, L-R: Jacob Barowsky, Grade 10; Sabine Lynch, Grade 8; Patrick Sullivan, Grade 9; Marie Bonner, Grade 9.**



**Sonny Raymond, Grade 12.**

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**PUBLICATION DATE**  
 February 18, 2026

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**Adagio Ensemble - Grades 9 through 12, directed by Rahul Roy.**



**PVPA Orchestra, directed by Jeremy Milligan.**